WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

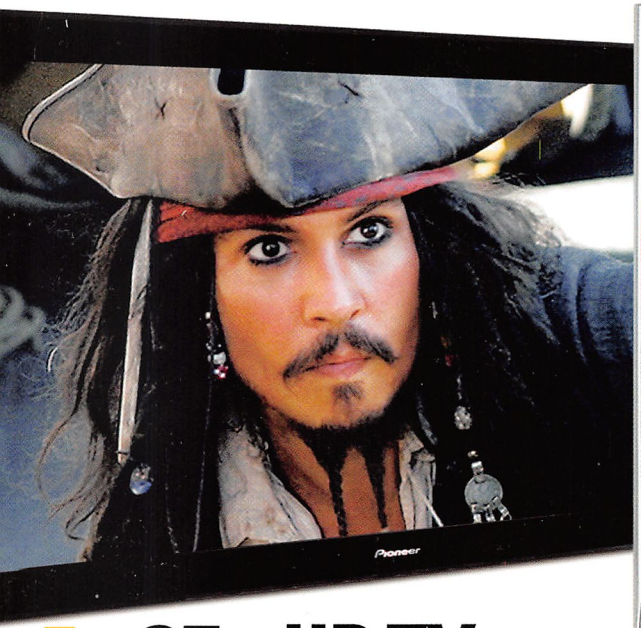
AUGUST 2006 £3.90

The world's No.1 home entertainment magazine

HIGH-DEF TV

What you must know before you buy Sky or Telewest!

THE VERDICT



OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED STAR BUYS

+ 37IN HD TV SUPERTEST

AND THE ULTIMATE HD PLASMA

NEW MUSIC MUSCLE!

Storming big-name amps from just £250

NOKIA vs THE NANO

But is the N91 phone as good as an iPod?

haymarket

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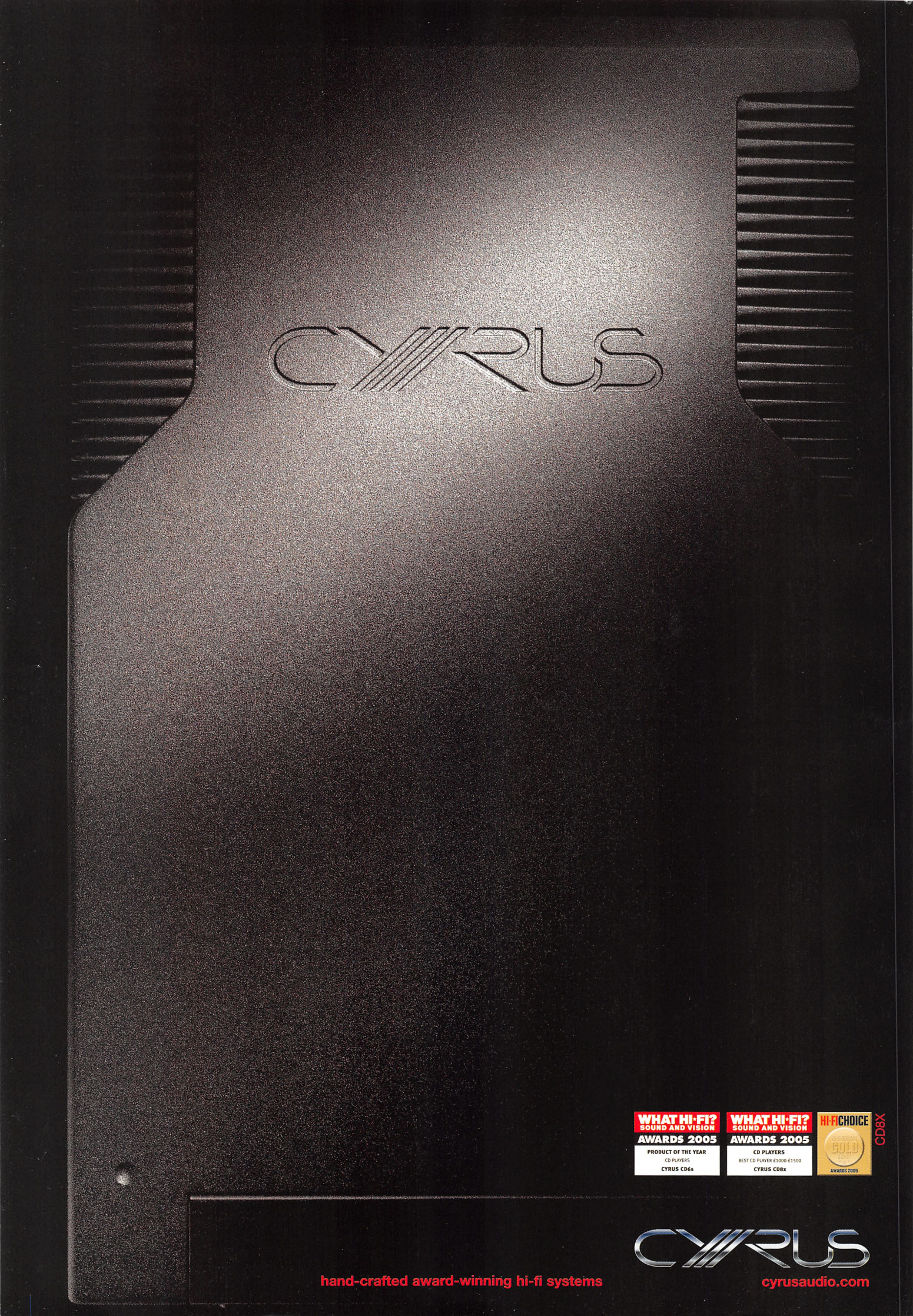
REVEALED! THIS SUMMER'S ESSENTIAL DVD PORTABLE p74


CYRUS
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CD PLAYERS
CYRUS CD6s
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CD PLAYERS
BEST CD PLAYER £1000-£1500
CYRUS CD8x
HI-FI CHOICE
GOLD
AWARDS 2005
CD8X
CYRUS
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WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
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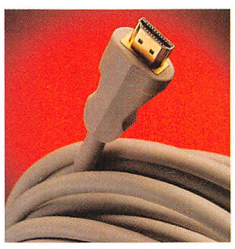
This month

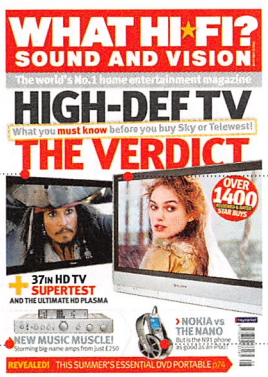
We're in a myth-busting mood this month, starting with the received wisdom that LCD flatscreens are now better than plasmas. Not if you want a 37in set, as our *Supertest* clearly shows **p38.** And while we're talking liquid crystals, you'd think a cheaper LCD projector would struggle against some premium DLP designs, but Panasonic's PT-AE900 proves it ain't necessarily so **p64.** There'd also be an assumption that a stereo amplifier that won a glowing five-star review last issue – or maybe the current Award-winner – would win this month's *Group Test*. Wrong again! **p68.** Finally, if you're going high-def – which *does* live up to the hype – don't believe all HDMI cables are the same **p52.** Trust your eyes, ears – and us.



CLARE NEWSOME, EDITOR clare.newsome@haynet.com

HIGH DEF: THE VERDICT
Sky and Telewest are both competing for your High Def pound. Our testers have lived with installation and service from the big two suppliers, so now we can exclusively tell you how they rate **p58**

NEW MUSIC MUSCLE
These budget amplifiers deserve to be at the heart of many a system, but just because they're cheap doesn't mean they're weak – quite the reverse! **p62**



37IN FLATSCREEN SUPERTEST
Two Panasonic plasmas take on the might of the LCD giants in this flat-screen shoot-out. Which is the best of these family sized HD-Ready TVs? Our in-depth *Supertest* reveals all on **p38**

LATEST BIG-NAME PRODUCTS
Whether it's the latest MP3 mobile from Nokia, a portable DAB radio from Pure, or Toshiba's DVD player, we've got all your bases covered **p6**

WHY WE'RE NO.1...

OUR TESTS ARE CONDUCTED IN DEDICATED FACILITIES
Our suite of test rooms is respected the world over, and every product is reviewed there by our team of experts.

WE'RE COMPLETELY IMPARTIAL
Every verdict is that of the magazine, not of an advertiser or a press officer. When we say something's good, it is.

YOU CAN TRUST OUR EXPERIENCE
We have nearly 30 years of experience. We've seen great products come and go, and know a flash in the pan when we see one.

WE SPOT THE BIG TRENDS FIRST
We have a proven track record of being first to spot the big trends, from CD to MP3.

DECEMBER 1999 MP3 COVER STORY
Testing MP3 players back when the iPod was just a twinkle in Apple's eye...

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We're here to cover the world of sound and vision, from the latest flatscreens to the newest MP3 players. Find it all in every issue.

AND WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOU
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hifianswers@haynet.com
mp3answers@haynet.com

"The HDMI pictures are great, making the Toshiba DVD player outrageous value for money" FIRST TESTS, p11

"Products that cost £2000 less than a year ago are now as cheap as £1400" 37IN FLATSCREEN SUPERTEST, p38

"We've found ourselves rewatching shows just to enjoy them again in high-definition" LIVING WITH HIGH DEF, p58

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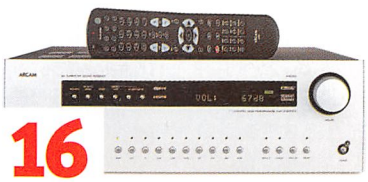
including Arcam's latest multichannel masterpiece, Pure's portable perfection, Toshiba's cut-price projector, and ProAc's solid speakers



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Superb family flatscreens

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First Tests

PACKED WITH EXCLUSIVE REVIEWS OF HOT NEW KIT

The best screen we've ever seen

50IN PLASMA
PIONEER PDP-5000EX
★★★★★
£ 6000

FOR
Staggering picture quality. No, really: just plain staggering. This is what the telly looks like in heaven, apparently

AGAINST
Not a television, only a display; not cheap; only really excels with high def

VERDICT
Big, beautiful and brilliant: one of those eye-popping, mould-breaking, class-defining products that's sure to send shockwaves through the marketplace

OKAY, WE ADMIT it – this is a great job. Despite the crushing deadlines, penurious paymasters and occasionally formidable hours, we do actually get paid to watch the telly – the life, eh?

Especially when you're watching Pioneer's new PDP-5000EX. It's customary to leave you hanging on for a few hundred words before we cut to the chase, preferably after some witty badinage designed to sustain the suspense. But y'know what? We can't wait that long this time. Here's the bottom line, the lowdown, the verdict: we think this is the best plasma ever made.

Resolution the key to realism

Still reading? Fair enough – let's put some meat on the bones of our hyperbole. The PDP-5000EX is a display, not a television, and sits above Pioneer's existing PDP-506XDE in the range. Quite some way above, in fact: at £6000, the '5000EX is £2600 more than its same-sized sibling. So how does it justify such a significant price difference? Simple: this is the first plasma we've tested to offer 1920 x 1080 resolution. We'll go into that in more depth in our panel below, but the key technical benefit is easily expressed: a '506XDE has 983,040 pixels, whereas a 5000EX offers 2,073,600 – more than twice as many.

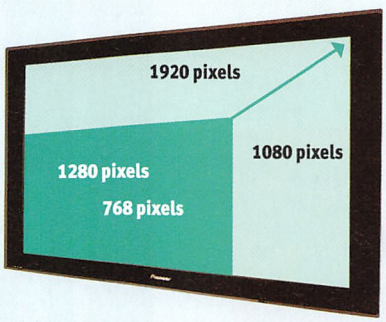
Now, we've pointed out before that resolution alone doesn't dictate picture quality, and for some viewers – in particular, those watching standard-definition TV and DVD – it'll be hard to spot the differences between one 50in Pioneer and another. The company itself agrees: the '506XDE continues unchanged within the model range, because for many buyers, it's perfectly adequate. The flagship PDP-5000EX, by contrast, targets another customer altogether: the enthusiast, the high-def addict, the home cinema buff. You, in other words.

And if you've the money, there's no denying that your cash buys astonishing picture quality. Send the PDP-5000EX a 1080i image from Sky HD, or 1080p imagery from a Media Centre PC or top-class DVD player, and it flattens everything else on the market. In the aspect-ratio mode dubbed 'Dot By Dot' (which maps the incoming 1920 x 1080 signal precisely on to the Pioneer's plasma panel), definition is extraordinary, and traditional plasma artefacts such as blocking and banding are impossible to detect. The picture simply shines, as bright, sharp, colourful and consistently lustrous as the most high-resolution of

"This plasma's picture shines bright, sharp and is consistently lustrous"

KNOW HOW PIXEL POWER

THE PIONEER'S 1920 x 1080 resolution puts it at the very forefront of modern display technology. We've tested TVs offering this level of detail before, including LCDs from Philips and Sharp, but this is the first plasma to achieve such lofty heights. It's also the first we've tested that offers full 1080p compatibility – previous sets had the resolution, but lacked the appropriate input interface. The Pioneer offers both, making it fully prepared for both the best of current technology and the High-Def future of Blu-Ray and HD-DVD.



Other Pioneer 50in plasmas have 1280 x 768 resolution, adding up to nearly a million pixels – the PDP-5000EX more than doubles that

JARGON BUSTER

1080p: the highest HD picture format, delivering 1080 horizontal lines in prog scan mode

MP3 PLAYER
Sony £180
Page 16

SYSTEMS
Russ Andrews £200
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Pioneer £400
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MEDIA PLAYER
PixelMagic £300
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MAINS CONDITIONER
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TELEVISION
Hitachi £2300
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TECH SPECS

SCREEN SIZE 50in
ASPECT RATIO 16:9
INTEGRATED TUNER No
RESOLUTION 1920 x 1080
HD-READY Yes
INPUTS 2 x HDMI, DVI-D, S-Video, composite, 6 x phono
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 75 x 128 x 10cm
WEIGHT 40kg

The styling is regular Pioneer – the high-def picture quality is in a different league

digital camera pictures. Except, of course, that it also moves – and even with rapid-fire motion, it remains a model of stability, focus and extraordinary clarity. The Pioneer also copes well with standard-definition Freeview TV, albeit with some extra noise thrown in.

However, since we can't imagine many potential buyers being prepared to settle for much less than a consistent diet of HD content, that's not a huge issue. The PDP-5000EX isn't for everyone, but if you want the best… here it is.

NOW ADD THESE

HIGH-DEF RECEIVER
SKY HD (OR TELEWEST)
★★★★★
£ 300 (or free)

Each high definition TV service has its merits, but one thing we're adamant about: either system is essential if you really want to make the most of the Pioneer's outstanding image quality.

DVD PLAYER & AV AMPLIFIER
DENON DVD-A1XVA & AVC-A1XV
★★★★★
£ 6700

The Denon will make your existing DVDs look stunning, especially since it now includes 1080p video scaling, while the AVC-A1XV has all the horsepower your ears could ever dream of.

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
B&W 805/HTM4S/ASW825
★★★★★
£ 5750

You could spend a lot more on speakers if you had the cash, but this set-up will certainly 'do'. Gorgeous looks and fab sounds, with both films and music.

TOTAL SYSTEM £18,750

MULTICHANNEL SPEAKER PACKAGE
M&K K-17
★★★☆☆
£ 2350

FOR
Well-integrated and typically forceful M&K sonic presentation; fine surround effects

AGAINST
Expensive: you can get similar sonics and superior styling for much less

VERDICT
Good, but this is a competitive market, and some rivals offer more

M&K package just doesn't add up

IT'S BEEN ALMOST a year since we last tested a speaker package from US outfit M&K, but time has only heightened our anticipation.

Thing is, over the years, we've developed quite a fondness for the company's all-action sonic signature, and we approached this new M&K package with similarly high expectations. It's the bigger brother of the acclaimed K-5 package (see review, *June 2005*), and is effectively the flagship surround package in M&K's mid-priced K-Series range. Compared with the K-5, this set-up uses larger, dual-driver K-17 front speakers for the front effects, with a pair of the ever-impressive K-4 Tripole surrounds (see panel) handling surround effects duties. There's also a much bigger and more powerful sub in the mix.

Get out of our way, suckers: the M&Ks laugh in the faces of curved cabinets

Style-wise, M&K has never shown much interest in the curvaceous cabinetry currently the rage in compact speaker systems, and the regulation straight-edged look of this set-up is plain and purposeful – though those titanium grilles do help lighten proceedings a little.

The speaker configuration is trademark M&K, too. The K-17s, with their twin 10cm midrange drivers, provide a fuller frequency response than the diminutive K-5 satellites we tested last year, reaching down to 80Hz – but no more than that. Other, lower, sounds are the responsibility of the VX-860, which is a classic 30cm, forward-firing M&K subwoofer of the fast, vital and muscular school. It provides plenty of punch and speed, even in our biggest listening room, while integrating beautifully with its satellite-speaker siblings.

"It provides plenty of punch and speed, and integrates beautifully"

Sounds exactly how it looks

Yet somehow, the K-17 package doesn't quite justify its lofty price-tag. It's very capable, for sure, but we dug out a £1575 B&W MT-30 system, and when compared to that fine, Award-winning package, the £2350 M&K doesn't do enough to justify its £775 premium.

Now don't get us wrong: this isn't a bad-sounding system (far from it). It has power, dynamic impact and detail a-plenty. It's just that you'll struggle to highlight areas where the M&K is sonically superior to its much cheaper B&W rival. We suspect that the MT-30 has simply raised the bar for packages of this type – and it looks great, too. The chunkier, pricier K-17 gets tripped up as a result, and that means only three stars.

KNOW HOW TRIPOLE SPEAKERS

IF YOU VISIT a real cinema – and we hope you still do – you'll notice that it sports dozens of rear speakers, arranged along both the sides and the rear walls of the auditorium. That's unlikely for the typical home user (unless you have a huge living room and/or an amazingly understanding partner), which is where multidirectional surround speakers come in.

They sport more drive units than standard stereo pairs, and emulate the effect of multiple speakers by firing sounds in several directions at once. M&K's Tripole approach provides three sets of drive units, with an oversized tweeter on each side of the cabinet, and a conventional forward-firing tweeter/midrange array. The result? Better surround sound spread.

ALSO CONSIDER

B&W MT-30
★★★★★
£1575
September 2005
Beautiful finish and fine sound, with excellent bass – all at a cheaper price than the M&K system

PROAC RESPONSE HEXA
★★★★☆
£2496
March 2004
Expensive but very capable, this is a particularly good choice if you want a compact system that can play music, too

TECH SPECS

SYSTEM MAX POWER 150w
SUBWOOFER POWER 250w
SPEAKERS IMPEDANCE 4 ohms
DIMENSIONS (K-17) 33 x 12 x 15cm
WEIGHT (K-17) 4kg
RESPONSE (K-17) 80Hz-20kHz
FINISHES Titanium with metal grille

DAB/FM PORTABLE RADIO
PURE ONE
★★★★★
£ 50

Pure One is DAB radio bargain

FOR
Good, clear delivery; mains and battery; new DAB text features

AGAINST
A little extra money buys more substantial sound and build

VERDICT
A skinny milk latte version of the Pure Evoke range, the One still hits the spot

NOT CONTENT WITH ruling the roost at higher price bands, Pure's latest model tackles the budget section of the digital radio world. The One becomes its entry-level DAB radio and retails at a penny under fifty pounds – if it's anywhere near as capable as Pure's exceptional Evoke range, the competition might as well pack up and head home.

Well, the One's performance means it should sell in shedloads. However, don't think you're getting

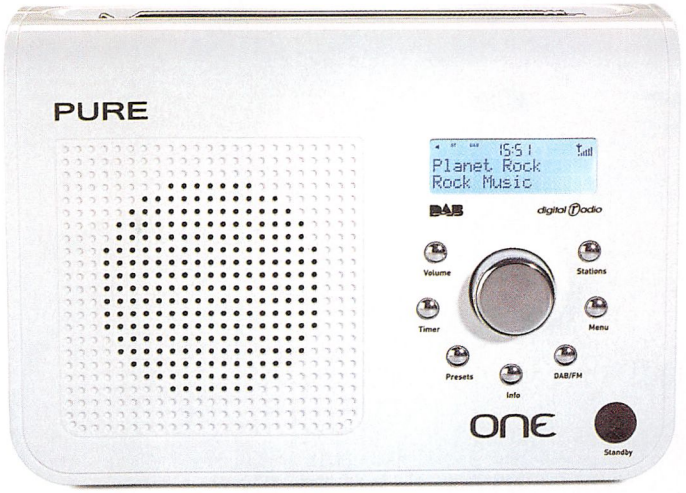
"Pure doesn't seem to build anything but competitive DAB sets"

£100-plus radio performance – you're not. Though the One offers good clarity and class-leading levels of detail, it lacks the authority, bass-reach and richness of sets such as Tivoli's analogue-only Model One and Pure's own Evoke-1^{XT}. These superior-sounding sets cost double the money, but if you plan lots of radio listening, spend more than this. The One is a good listen, though, and if you struggle to pick up digital signals (as you occasionally might, due to its diffident tuning), there's the FM option.

One funky set of features

The One hosts a couple of nicely innovative features: when listening to digital stations, you can pause the scrolling text (handy to note down info), and you can also store text data and read it later. Power is either via mains or battery – 20 hours from the bespoke £30 Pure battery unit, or 35 hours from six C size batteries – meaning the One is truly portable, and build, though lightweight, is fine for the money.

Pure doesn't seem to build anything but competitive digital radios, and the One is no different.



The One might prop up Pure's range, but it does the family name proud

ALSO CONSIDER

BUSH TR2004DAB
★★★★½
£80
May 2006
Impressive digital radio sound bundled into Bush's timeless retro styling

INTEMPO KT-01
★★★★★
£60
January 2006
Great sound combined with kitsch pink looks makes the Intempo a colourful option

DVD PLAYER
SAMSUNG
DVD-HD860
★★★★★
£ 115

FOR
Smooth operator when it comes to rapid action; stable picture; realistic colours; stylish build

AGAINST
Picture not as sharp as it could be

VERDICT
Great-value sound and vision housed in a stylish chassis

Slick Samsung has style and quality

ELSEWHERE IN THIS issue (on p11), you'll find a review of Toshiba's new SD-360E DVD player. That machine offers a pretty much identical spec to this new Samsung, plus shaves £35 off the price. Factor in the Tosh's five-star verdict and you might well ask, why buy this Samsung?

Well, there really is little to choose between the pair, but if you watch lots of action movies, this 'HD860 might be worth the added investment. Spin a fast-moving flick, such as *The Island*, and the Samsung offers a slick hand when it comes to tracking Ewan, Scarlett, giant pipes et al careering noisily through mid-21st century Los Angeles. Look closely at the picture background, and you also notice that the Samsung's image remains impressively stable, even when faced with tricky images such as a cloudy sky or a sandy beach. We're also impressed with this machine's colour balance, which lends a more realistic look to movies, and reproduces flesh tones comfortably.

All sorts of upscaling treats

The Samsung passes other crucial video performance tests – including three-dimensionality and detail – with flying colours, though the overall image might prove a little soft for some. This understated tendency is more noticeable during playback via HDMI than through component. Otherwise the 'HD860 does its job with panache, offering 480p, 576p, 720p, 768p, and 1080i scaling via the digital video output – though owners of higher-end screens and projectors might find their display's scaler offers even better results. It also delivers

"If you watch a lot of action movies, this is a superior budget player"

exciting movie sound via a choice of digital audio outputs.

The quality of CD replay also challenges that from budget rivals, and if you're still looking for a reason to buy this Samsung, here's a singularly shallow one: it looks cool, and we like its black finish. Well, fashion, even in *What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision*, has its place, you know.

ALSO CONSIDER

DENON DVD-1720
★★★★★
£130
October 2005
No HDMI output, but the Denon looks and sounds great via its analogue sockets

TOSHIBA SD-360E
★★★★★
£80
August 2006
Toshiba's sub-£100 machine, complete with HDMI output, is a budget star

B&W Bowers & Wilkins

MT-30
with PV1 subwoofer

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
B&W MT-20

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
BEST COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGE £1500+
B&W MT-30

> MINI THEATRE

Seeing a movie is one thing. Feeling it, getting swept away by it, is another. What you hear and how you hear it makes all the difference. When sound surrounds you, you're drawn deeper into the movie's highs and lows. B&W's stylish new Mini Theatre systems deliver movie sound with all the power and the presence to move you, without forcing you to move the furniture. Three configurations, each based around a different B&W subwoofer, offer alternatives to suit every size of private cinema.

The constant in each system is the compact M-1 satellite speaker, designed from scratch to provide lifelike cinematic sound, understated looks and instant usability. From its handpicked crossover componentry and tube-loaded tweeter to its high-strength, clamshell-style outer casing, the M-1 is a unified, integrated system in itself, optimised to deliver a natural, more organic sound to the movies you love.

T+44 (0)1903 221500 www.bwspeakers.com

MT-10
with AS1 subwoofer

MT-20
with AS2 subwoofer

DVD PLAYER
TOSHIBA SD-360E
★★★★★
£ 80

FOR
Cracking value picture from HDMI and component outputs; good sound quality; svelte design

AGAINST
Extra cash can buy even better image stability and excellence with motion

VERDICT
Great value – the SD-360E is the ideal budget player

Toshiba's latest is a DVD steal

HOW DO YOU improve on a bargain? When we first tested this Toshiba's predecessor, the SD-350E, we lauded its exceptional value for money, and went on to give it an Award – but even so, we did feel the picture quality from its HDMI output could have been better.

Looks like they listened to us

Looks like, with the new SD-360E, Toshiba has fixed things. The HDMI picture is great, making this player simply outrageous value for money. Another Award-winner? Could be…

Like the SD-350E's, this Toshiba's specification is comprehensive, covering the aforementioned HDMI facility, and embracing component down to composite sockets. Add DivX-friendliness, on top of both coaxial and optical digital outputs,

"This player is excellent value. If you want a £100 DVD player, here it comes"

and you've got a budget player fit for, if not quite a king, certainly a cousin or close personal friend of the ruler.

Even more svelte than its slimline predecessor, the '360E adds a neat, slanted fascia to create an attractive look, and though it's still in the budget-build class, it's solid enough at the price – though a new feature, the fixed mains lead, does prevent you upgrading with a better-quality mains cable, as you could before.

Hooked up to a suitable display, the '360E outputs delicious 720p and 1080i pictures. Choose a TV partner along the lines of an HDMI-equipped 32in LCD, such as Sony's KDL-32V2000 or Toshiba's 32WLT66, and the budget player presents an excellent colour balance, avoiding the overblown or pallid results of lesser rivals. DVDs look good and natural, without losing their 'cinematic' feel.

Fast-motion replay isn't absolutely perfect, though you wouldn't expect it to be at this price, with rapid action causing a touch of judder, but overall, its ability with movement impresses.

Spin a favourite tester, such as the first *Lord of the Rings* outing, and the Toshiba picks out good amounts of detail from the rich palette, while static edges stay sharp and true.

Digital connection if you can

Switch down a level from HDMI to prog-scan-enabled component connections, and the Toshiba continues to lead its class, offering great contrast and sharpness. However, HDMI is the preferred option.

On the sonic front, the '360E is perfectly capable, sounding composed with movies and managing to deliver a decent bout of rhythm from two-channel recordings. Essentially, if you want a sub-£100 DVD player, here it is.

ALSO CONSIDER

DENON DVD-1720
★★★★★
£130 October 2005
You won't find HDMI or DVI-D outputs here, but the Denon performs well via analogue component sockets

SAMSUNG DVD-HD860
★★★★★
£115 August 2006
Samsung's latest HDMI-equipped budget number offers a stylish-looking alternative to the Toshiba

STEREO SPEAKERS
PROAC
STUDIO 130
★★★★★
£ 1100

FOR
Great dynamics and insight; fine timing; solid build

AGAINST
Plain appearance; needs care in system-matching

VERDICT
These are excellent speakers that sound great with all types of music: need loads of running-in, mind

ProAcs need patience

THESE PROACS TAKE an age to run in. In fact, ours took over 70 hours before they clicked. But once that's done, you'll enjoy chameleon-like speakers, capable of playing just about every genre of music with the utmost skill.

The 130s have the ProAc Studio family sound: they're dynamic, detailed and insightful – but like other models in the range, the tonal balance hints at brashness at the top end. However, they're refined enough, so this isn't a problem in all but the most aggressive of systems.

Positioned out into the room and toed-in, these towers are transparent enough to distinguish the open, natural quality of Bruce Springsteen's *The Seeger Sessions*, but also deliver the punchy bass and rapid-fire rhythms of Wyclef Jean's *The Ecleftic*.

Sure, you can buy flashier-looking speakers for the money, but if sound quality is important – and let's face it, it should be – then the Studio 130s must be auditioned.

After a nearly three-day run-in, the ProAcs finally fully revealed their magnificent selves

Rotel 06 Series Take a look. Imagine that it looked a bit more extravagant. You know: LEDs to light up the room. Knobs, buttons and sockets in abundance. If we gave the 06 Series looks like that on top of its sublime sound, you would have to pay maybe four times as much for it. The thing is, we don't think you should pay exceptional sums for exceptional sound. And thanks to our policy of spending every penny maximising the performance of our separates, it just means there isn't much left for unnecessary design flourishes. We think it's all about the music. Take a listen and judge for yourself. **www.rotel.com**

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DLP PROJECTOR
TOSHIBA
TDP-S8
★★★☆☆
£ 650

FOR
Ultra portable; stable picture; fairly natural colour balance

AGAINST
Softness to image; lacks overall cleanliness; black levels not great

VERDICT
Better than the Panasonic, but when it comes to pure picture performance, you can buy better

Tosh projector gets carried away

STRICTLY SPEAKING, THIS is the *First Tests* section, but the fact that this test shares a page with another budget projector is, of course, no coincidence. Both projectors come from similar places in terms of design, function and price.

Our 'S8 sample was delivered in its carry case – portability is part of the selling premise. If you plan to constantly move your projector, either from room to room or round to your mates', then this will no doubt appeal to you.

"It comes with a carry case, and portability is seen as a selling point"

This is an 800 x 600 resolution DLP design, so, like the Panasonic below, it has a native 4:3 aspect ratio – and isn't HD Ready. Specs include a claimed 2000:1 contrast ratio and 2000 lumens brightness, plus composite, S-Video and PC sockets – the last taking component and RGB signals via adapter.

Set-up is simple, thanks in part to the manual zoom and focus controls and the two sturdy feet.

The picture performance is a real mixed bag. Yes, this unit sells itself on its short-throw and portability, but we must still judge it on picture performance first and foremost – many of its competitors can work in a business environment, too.

The image is largely free of noise, and deals fairly comfortably with fast motion. Colours are okay, with skin tones rendered naturally, while detail levels are, again, not bad. However, we do have gripes.

The picture lacks the cleanliness and colour vitality we would like, meaning contrast levels are disappointing and deep blacks lack insight. The crunch comes when you remind yourself of the quality available at this price. On a budget, the Tosh will do a job, and it is very portable, but there are far better performers for not much more.

Despite having a useful design, there are much better projectors at this price level

ALSO CONSIDER

INFOCUS IN72
★★★★★
£900
July 2006
Terrific picture for the money, with fine contrast and sharp details; smart design, plus it's nice and quiet

OPTOMA H27
★★★★★
£700
September 2005
Similar price to this Toshiba, but offers an HDMI input and 16:9 resolution, plus a great picture

LCD PROJECTOR
PANASONIC
PT-P1SD
★★☆☆☆
£ 750

FOR
Decent colour balance; detail is okay; short throw.

AGAINST
Poor contrast; lattice effect; picture has instability and noise

VERDICT
A whopping image, but the quality of picture isn't up to scratch

Small Panasonic has big flaws

TWENTY-FOUR – EVEN 12 – months ago, a £750 projector would've been considered bargain-basement. However, such is the rapid pace of change in the home cinema environment, it's now possible to (a) get projectors much cheaper still, and (b) get a massively impressive picture performance at £700.

So, with such fierce competition, what does the Panasonic have going for it? Immediately obvious is its portability: it weighs just 1.3kg and measures just 23cm by 19cm. It's also incredibly easy to set up, navigate and control – even if the feet underneath the chassis could be a touch more stable.

There are composite, S-Video and PC inputs, the last happily supporting a component video signal via an adapter. There's also an SD card slot

"We found it too hard to ignore the lattice effect that lies over the screen"

for viewing images or movies directly from a memory card. The quoted 1500-lumens brightness indicates this is aimed at the business market, working happily enough in a bright room, and the 800 x 600 resolution LCD design, means a 4:3 native aspect ratio, too.

The picture – being fed a progressive scan component signal – is underwhelming. Watching no-brain teen comedy *The Long Weekend*, you'll find it hard to ignore the lattice effect lying over the screen. While the colour balance is actually quite good, contrast is poor, making for murky black areas.

Just not versatile enough

Watching the action scenes in *The New World* DVD also highlights the PT-P1SD's problems with motion smearing, while noise and general instability are a constant intrusion on your watching pleasure.

In fact, with the quality now available at this price, pleasure isn't really the operative word to use here. Unless you only watch office presentations, we suggest you check out our *Also Considers*.

Suitable for presentations in bright rooms perhaps, but not so great for home movies

ALSO CONSIDER

INFOCUS IN72
★★★★★
£900
July 2006
As we said above, it's got a great picture for the money, with fine contrast and sharp details; neat design and it's quiet to use

OPTOMA H27
★★★★☆
£700
September 2005
Boasts an HDMI input that delivers a very convincing picture with fine colours. It also has a true 16:9 image

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
DENON AVR-2807
★★★★☆
£ 800

FOR
Plenty of features; detailed, crisp sound; goes loud

AGAINST
The best in this class offers a more dynamic, assured presentation

VERDICT
Yet another fine Denon – like you'd expect anything else. However, not the best available

Denon piles on the features

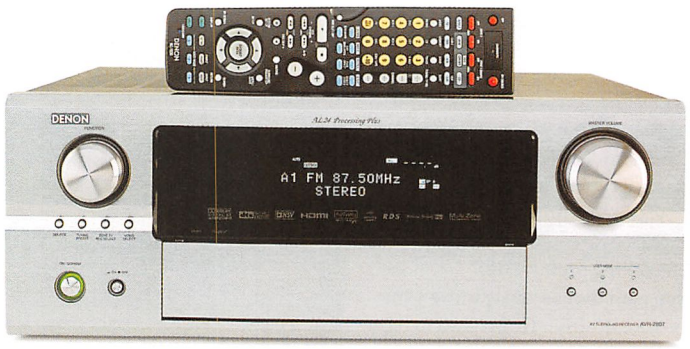
THERE'S MORE SURROUND sound on offer in 2006 than ever. HDTV is usually accompanied by Dolby Digital 5.1 audio, while both XBox 360 and its Sony nemesis, the PS3, will provide home cinema-style audio. Add in the launch of HD-DVD and Blu-Ray – well, we're optimists – and you've more reasons than ever to buy a high-quality surround receiver.

"Detail levels are great and clarity is fine – it's a very enjoyable listen"

And Denon's beefy AVR-2807 is certainly that. It's pitched against Yamaha's formidable, test-winning RX-V2600, yet cannily undercuts its rival by a worthwhile £100.

Plenty of facilities and features

The AVR-2807 is certainly very well-equipped. At 7 x 110w, there's ample power, and you can biamp your front speakers if you prefer 'plain' 5.1 sound. More notably, the '2807 includes compatibility with Denon's new iPod dock, HDMI switching for two sources, and automatic room set-up with speaker EQ from Audyssey.



Denon's familiar styling looks as classy as ever in the AVR-2807

However, despite employing Faroudja video processing and offering upconversion of all video sources to HDMI, the AVR-2807 doesn't include a 720p/1080i video scaler, unlike its Yamaha rival. Given the £100 price saving, that's probably fair enough.

What concerns us more, though, is the Denon's slightly restrained sound. In that regard, it's much like its AVR-3806 sibling (£1000): during the biggest dynamic peaks, the sound lacks the cohesion and impact we'd expect. There's plenty of volume, for sure – but the blistering authority and fabulous punch of the RX-V2600 elude it.

Now don't get us wrong: like we said, this is still a high-quality receiver. Detail levels are excellent, clarity is fine, and surround processing more-than-adequate: it's a very enjoyable listen, and it's also well-equipped. It's just that, for only £100 more (before any haggling), the Yamaha is even better.

ALSO CONSIDER

ARCAM AVR250
★★★★★
£1000
June 2006
Simplicity itself next to the Denon – but still a superb listen, especially with music

YAMAHA RX-V2600
★★★★★
£900
June 2006
The current class king surpasses the Denon for both features and, crucially, overall sound quality

MOBILE PHONE/MP3 PLAYER
NOKIA N91
★★★★☆
£ Varied

FOR
Convenient; easy to use; several accessories come as standard; a smooth listen

AGAINST
Sounds less entertaining than we'd like; could be pricey, depending on your contract – we've seen it from free to £475

VERDICT
This is the closest a mobile phone has come to being a true music player, too – but it can't yet match an iPod

Nokia N91 takes on the nano

WITH 2005 IPOD sales of almost 22.5 million, you'd name Apple as the don of digital music devices. Nokia begs to differ, saying it sold more than 45m mobile phones last year with an integrated music player. It's a largely spurious claim – most of those mobiles hold a mere handful of songs – but there's no denying the N91's musical potential.

1000 tunes from PC or Mac

The phone has a 4GB hard drive – enough for around 1000 songs – an FM radio and playback controls. There's support for MP3, AAC and WMA music files and more, though not iTunes Store downloads. It syncs directly with (and shares the interface of) Windows Media Player 10, with Nokia Music Manager for Mac enabling Apple users to easily transfer tunes.

The N91 works as a music player even with your SIM card removed, which may be enough to convince air-crew to let you use it in-flight. Battery life is a reasonable 12.5 hours in music-player mode.

Don't forget the 3G phone stuff (video calls, internet on-the-go), plus a 2 megapixel camera and wi-fi and Bluetooth cable-free connectivity. There's also a desktop dock, travel charger, in-line remote control, cables and headphones.

The N91 is quite chunky by modern mobile standards, weighing 164g

You can swap the freebie in-ears for decent headphones and still use the handy clip-on remote control, which includes a hands-free microphone. Music and the (average) radio pauses when a call comes in, then continues when you hang up. But beware: you can all-too easily hit the play button as you talk, and blast your caller with music.

"It can't rival the nano for sound, but then the iPod can't phone mates"

With decent bit-rate music files, you can coax a highly listenable performance from the N91. Its soothing style rounds off rough edges, which sounds appealing until you realise tracks like Kaiser Chiefs' *I Predict A Riot* lose their essential energy. It certainly can't match the punchy pace of the similar-spec iPod nano, and lacks the latter's portability or solid-state durability. But then an iPod can't take and make calls, can it?

In short, this is the best music phone yet, but could be even better.

ALSO CONSIDER

APPLE iPOD NANO 4GB
★★★★★
£179
Awards 2005
More portable (weighs 42g compared to N91's 164g) and sounds superior

SENNHEISER PX100
★★★★★
£35
Awards 2005
Not a rival, but an upgrade: superb sound-boosting headphones

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*Compatible Panasonic Viera TVs need an HD set-top box to display high definition broadcasts. Available in 2006 on subscription basis. Check with your provider for further details. Freeview ™ and Logo © DTV Services Ltd 2002.

MP3 PLAYER
SONY
NW-A3000
★★★★★
£ 180

FOR
Smart design; intelligent user interface; punchy bass; airy, open presentation

AGAINST
Irritating software – and the fact that you have to use it

VERDICT
A super-stylish, great sounding Sony portable: software aside, it's hard to fault

Stylish Sony hits MP3 purple patch

TRUST SONY TO do something different with the design of its MP3 players. The NW-A3000 is the latest in a long line of Network Walkman machines, and manages to do everything it does with just two main buttons and a click wheel. We wonder where Sony's designers got that little idea from…

In the deep glossy purple of our review sample, the NW-A3000 certainly looks very classy indeed, especially when you press the go button and the display lights up behind the front panel.

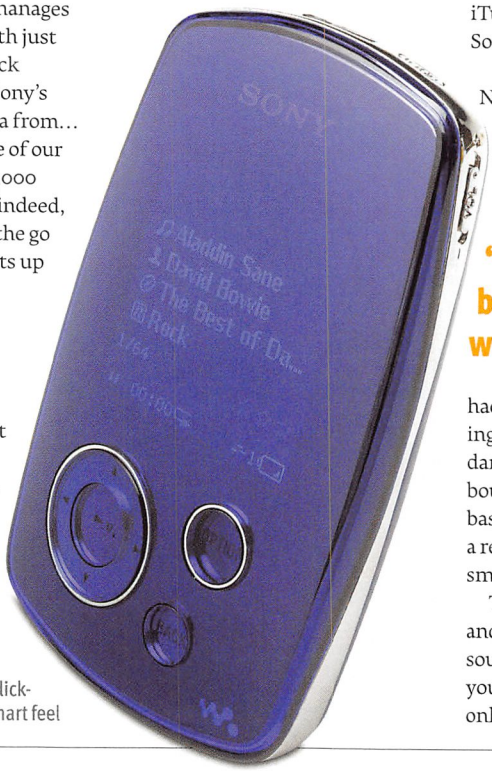
Clear and logical menus

This is a 20GB hard-disk device, so it's reasonably weighty at around 180g, but it fits comfortably in the hand, and has a wide range of well-considered features. Operation is clear and logical, and we like the orange-lit Artist Link button on the side that lets you find more of the same kind of music with a single push. But transferring music is via Sony's 'love it or loathe it' Connect software – no simple drag and drop here – which can be something of a stumbling block: if you've used other jukebox software (such as iTunes), you're likely to find the Sony software rather irritating.

That said, once loaded the NW-A3000 does sound very good via the little headphones supplied, and if you think the maximum level is a little too cautious, you can find an online hack to let you turn off the limiting. Across a range of rock, pop and dance tunes, the Sony delivers a bouncy, breezy sound with good bass, a vibrant, open midrange and a reasonably transparent yet smooth treble performance.

"The Sony delivers a bouncy, breezy sound, with punchy basslines"

This Sony has plenty of capacity, and looks and feels very classy. It sounds great, too – even better if you upgrade the headphones. If only Sony would sort that software.



Stylish purple casework and a click-wheel-design give the Sony a smart feel

ALSO CONSIDER

APPLE iPOD NANO
★★★★★
£179
Awards 2005
The 4GB nano has a smaller memory than the Sony, but it's a great sonic performer, and a style icon to boot

SAMSUNG YP-Z5
★★★★★
£110
June 2006
The new player from Samsung offers bags of punch, and a thoroughly musical listen

MICRO SYSTEM
RUSS ANDREWS
RAVE 1 USB
★★★★½
£ 200

FOR
Good looks and tidy dimensions; big-boned, detailed sound; USB input

AGAINST
Still not the most powerful; lack of mains connection is just miserly

VERDICT
Much-improved, both in sound and spec – but you can do even better

A micro to RAVE about?

SEPTEMBER 2004, AND Russ Andrews' original RAVE system lands in the WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION offices. Just like a Curate's egg, it's very good in places, but doomed to an average three-star review. After all, it's pretty quiet – and what kind of amp/speakers system designed for use with your laptop doesn't have a digital input?

Fast-forward to today, and our complaints have, apparently, been addressed, in the form of the RAVE 1 USB. It still comprises a compact, portable amplifier and a couple of plastic-bodied loudspeakers, but there have been changes: power is up, and the third of the four amplifier inputs is now a USB. Now that's much more like it: the USB input allows your laptop or MP3 player to connect without fuss, and the more powerful amplification means you don't have to wind up the volume control all that far.

Full sound with lively tempo

The sound is composed, quite full-figured and enjoys a lively tempo: by laptop/desktop sonic standards, you shouldn't find too much to complain about. The lack of mains or speaker cables is stingy, even if a discount on RA products is meant to sweeten the pill. The one problem is simply this: some rivals sound better for about the same money – hence no fifth star.

The RAVE 1's USB input makes it easy to integrate with laptops or MP3 players

ALSO CONSIDER

AUDICA MPS-1
★★★★★
£250
June 2006
Lovely looks and sophisticated sound add up to the best desktop amp/speakers combo around

Tacima: cleaning the mains for stunning sonic gains

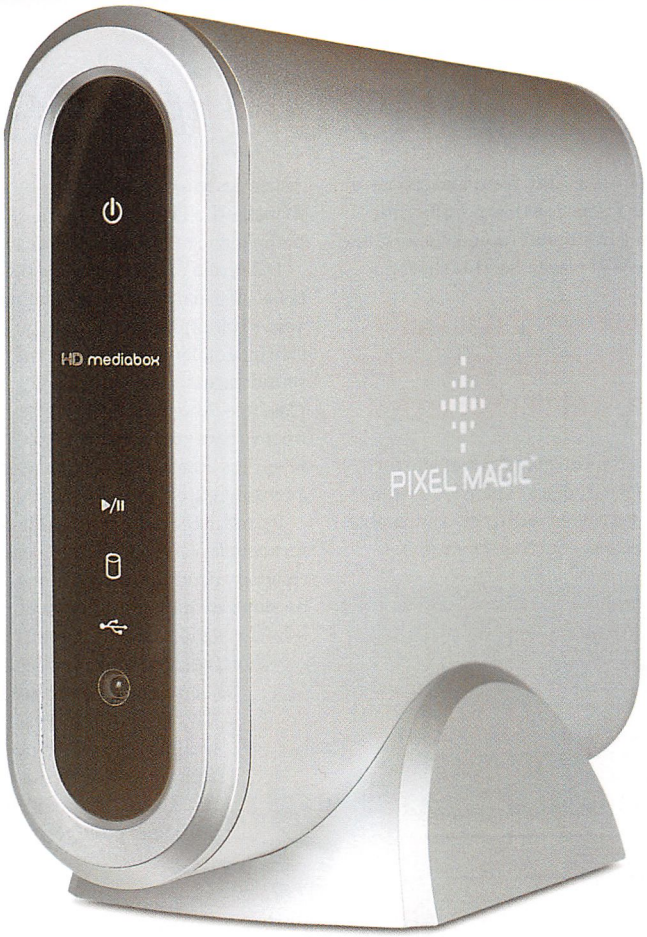
MAINS CLEANER
TACIMA
CS929
★★★★★
£ 40

VERDICT
Well worth a week's beer money, this product really is a no-brainer

WE'VE SAID IT BEFORE, and by God we're going to say it again. Don't expect to get the very best out of the lovely, expensive hi-fi equipment you've bought if you don't pay equal attention to the quality of the mains supply it has to work with. And this product, Tacima's fine-value CS929, explicitly illustrates the gains a modest outlay can achieve.

This six-way mains conditioner delivers truly dramatic audio gains. Comparing its performance to the 'unconditioned' sound, our reference CD/amp system enjoys greater separation and focus of sound, and greater clarity and confidence in the midrange. Bass is burlier and better integrated, too. In a nutshell? It really does work.

At the price, this £40 mains conditioner is a great-value upgrade



A tiny 20cm-high box, but one with an awful lot of ability

MEDIA PLAYER
HD MEDIABOX
MB100
★★★★★
£ 300

FOR
Excellent image quality; decent sound, too; easy to install and use; very affordable and flexible

AGAINST
Nothing notable

VERDICT
Cheap, clever and very capable, this is a great way to free your digital media. Add in a hard-disk for a fantastic portable High Def player

HD your PC!

HOW DO YOU watch your films these days? We'd bet most of us are still using traditional video sources, like DVD, cable and satellite TV.

But there's a growing army of viewers for whom high-quality home entertainment begins and ends with the home computer – and if that's you, the HD Mediabox MB100 positively demands a look.

"With an HDMI output and 1080p scaling, the picture quality is great"

It's an audio/video turbocharger for your computer (either PC or Mac), a video-capable sibling of products like the Roku SoundBridge.

Link an MB100 into your home network using Ethernet, and you can both listen to your favourite MP3, WAV, WMA and AAC music files through your hi-fi, and view stored DVD movies and high-def video files on your TV. And, thanks to the potent Pixel Magic video scaling crammed into the tiny MB100 chassis – it even offers an HDMI output and 1080p scaling – the picture quality is just great. All you need do then is find the video content: we watched a few of our DVDs (carefully backed up on to our computer, you understand), and downloaded some HD files from *www.apple.com/quicktime/guide/hd*. The results are hugely impressive, especially at the price.

Oh, and one other cute feature you might want to know about: if you fancy a portable HD source, perhaps for your bedroom, you can squeeze a little hard-disk into the MB100, making it an entirely self-contained portable unit. A 200GB disk should cost you around £80, and fitting is easy. It's just another appealing facet of this terrific unit.

ALSO CONSIDER ?

ROKU SOUNDBRIDGE M1000
★★★★★
£180 January 2006
Stylish, easy-to-use and very effective, this neat PC/Mac compatible audio player sounds great, and is simple to install

SLIM DEVICES SQUEEZEBOX 3
★★★★★
£230 April 2006
A little more complex to set up, but offers Wi-Fi connectivity, so it can join a wireless network

HOME CINEMA SYSTEM
PIONEER
DCS-360
★★★★½
£ 400

FOR
HDMI connection delivers an excellent picture; midrange is clear and detailed; punchy, dynamic performance

AGAINST
Satellites lack cohesion; can sound muddled when pushed hard

VERDICT
A solid system that boasts great pictures but doesn't quite deliver the same calibre of sound as some

One-box Pioneer's a visual treat

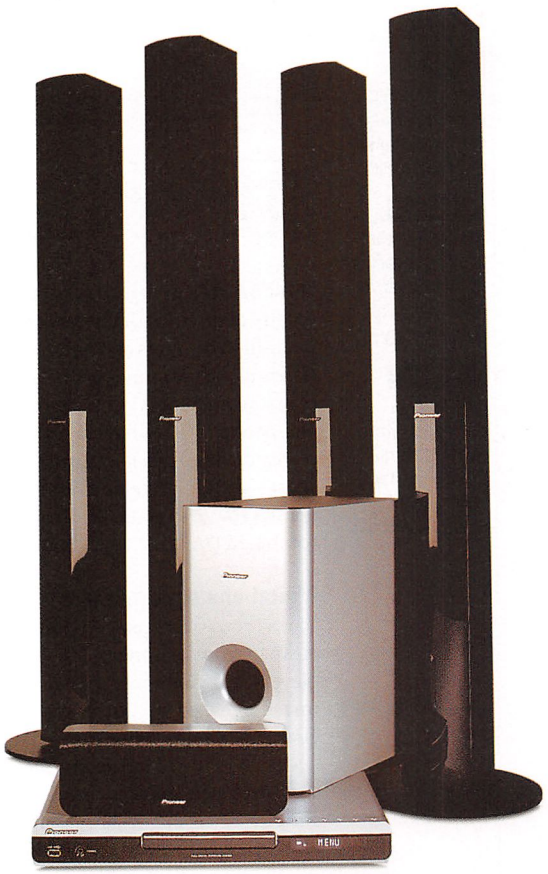
THIS SYSTEM IS the bigger brother of last month's *Group Test*-winning DCS-353. The real head-turner is the HDMI output, capable of delivering 720p or 1080i pictures. There is also a Scart output should you require, plus a USB input for connecting a portable device.

The picture is impressive: colours are vivid, edges are sharp and detail levels are excellent. Sonically, we're not quite so convinced. There's plenty of punch and

"Colours look vivid, edges are sharp and detail's truly excellent"

dynamics, while detail and clarity in the midrange is good. However, the cohesion between rear and front speakers could be better – when the action gets frenetic it can sound cluttered. At the price it has some fierce rivals: while it holds its own visually, sonics are not quite as good. But if picture is paramount, this is well worth considering.

The Pioneer gives a total cinema experience – including HDMI



MICRO SYSTEM
TEAC
CR-H255
★★★★☆
£ 270

FOR
Great spec, great build; detailed, composed listen

AGAINST
Not the most rhythmic, or crisp, listen

VERDICT
So convenient, so well made, so good looking – can you overlook a couple of sonic shortfalls?

TEAC micro claims big ideas

ON ONE HAND, TEAC's new CR-H255 is just another good-looking, well-made micro system that's ideal for the bedroom or kitchen. Looking at it another way, though, the CR-H255 is a splendidly specified, well-equipped music-maker that could turn out to be your MP3 player's best mate.

Features and connectivity

All the basics are present and correct. TEAC claims a power output of 25 watts per channel, which seems plausible when the CR-H255 is under way. In addition to CD playback (including MP3 files or CD-R/-RW discs), the TEAC packs in DAB, FM and MW radio reception, four line-level inputs, two outputs, a digital optical output, and a subwoofer preout. These allow excellent partnering flexibility.

Decent build quality, ergonomic good sense and a useful remote all help, too. And, front and centre on the fascia, is a USB port for plugging in suitable digital devices, like an MP3 player. So, this shoebox-sized receiver looks ready to form the heart of an expansive system.

"Bass is chunky and believable, and voices are full of expression"

Partnered with cost-comparable speakers – such as the £100 Q Acoustics 1010s we tested last month – the TEAC produces a performance of considerable charm.

It delivers bass in a chunky-yet-believable manner, while allowing voices full expression. There's no shortage of detail, either, and the soundstage is well-defined and plausible. And unlike some, this micro doesn't try to impress with relentless attack, instead mustering a considered, enjoyable sound.

It can't manage a fifth star, though, for a couple of reasons. First, it doesn't time very naturally – fast-moving basslines are lumpen, rather than sinuous – and, second, there's a shortage of sparkle to the treble.

In some cases (compressed MP3 files, say), that's a blessing – but for CD playback you get the feeling it could have a little more life. Still lots of positives, mind.

Comprehensive features and connectivity, along with a fine, musical sound, help the TEAC garner a worthwhile four stars

ALSO CONSIDER

ONKYO CR-505DAB
★★★★★
£220
October 2005
Usefully cheaper than the TEAC, this is an Award-winner, and a vigorous listen

YAMAHA CRX-M170
★★★★★
£300
April 2006
Fine-sounding and good value. Can be purchased without speakers for just £200

DAB/FM TUNER
MARANTZ
ST7001
★★★★☆
£ 300

FOR
Easy on the ears on both DAB and FM; decent build, and easy to use

AGAINST
Not the last word in transparency or resolution at this price level; a bit signal-hungry

VERDICT
Provided you can feed it with a decent signal, this is a good way to bring quality radio into your life

Tuner fishes for a strong feed

THERE'S A HEALTHY debate about the quality of digital radio: at its best, using high bit-rates and with a strong signal, it sounds great. But cram too many services in the available bandwidth – which happens plenty during a glorious summer of sport – and digital radio suddenly doesn't sound so good. That's why a combined DAB/FM tuner is great.

Digital-analogue hybrid tuner

The ST7001 tuner uses strengths gleaned from Marantz's CD players, offering short, mirror-image signal paths, plus high-quality power supplies.

On the convenience front, there are 200 presets, remote control and simple, logical operation. Analogue and digital outputs are provided, and there are separate aerial inputs for FM, DAB and medium wave.

The Marantz is signal-hungry: it's a bit 'squelchy' in a normal living room at home, but it thrives when used with an outdoor FM antenna, turning in a sound that's as enjoyable with Radio 4's speech and drama as it is with live music performances on Radio 3.

"The digital stations have a slightly drier sound than analogue"

There's not much it can do with compressed pop stations, mind, but with better-quality broadcasts, the Marantz sounds well-weighted and decently detailed.

Some rivals might be capable of more insight, but on the whole, this Marantz delivers an easy-going and refined listen. That's especially true with Radio 3 on FM, where the live concert atmosphere is delivered in a most pleasing fashion.

Used with an outdoor aerial, DAB reception is good, too, though the digital versions of these stations have a slightly drier sound than the analogue, with a fraction less presence and overall ambience.

Competition tough for tuners

This is a decent tuner with a strong array of features, but cheaper rivals such as the Denon TU-1800DAB and Pure DRX-702ES are just as capable. Hence the lack of a fifth star here.

ALSO CONSIDER

DENON TU-1800DAB
★★★★★
£250
November 2005
Best buy in our 2005 Awards – solid, full-bodied sound

PURE DIGITAL DRX-702ES
★★★★★
£210
July 2003
A 2003 Award-winner, and still a value for money hybrid tuner

TWO DIVAS IN PERFECT HARMONY

The **DV137** *is the world's first DVD player to use the Zoran Vaddis 888S chipset and includes Anchor Bay Technology's state-of-the-art upscaling technology to include 1080p, 1080i and 720p.*

Rarely do you come across a double act as talented as these new Arcam DiVA products.

Arcam has been at the forefront of high performance home cinema for over 10 years and has a worldwide reputation for audio and video excellence.

This latest combination of ultra high performance video and audio from the DV137 universal DVD player and AVR350 7.1 receiver incorporates technology that can claim to be the finest available at any price, enabling you to experience a performance that goes beyond anything you will have ever experienced from DVD and CD sources.

All you have to do is take a seat in your nearest Arcam dealer's demonstration room and prepare to be thrilled by the finest combination in the business.

ARCAM DiVA

www.arcam.co.uk/dealers

BRINGING MUSIC AND MOVIES TO LIFE

42IN PLASMA TV • WIND-UP AM/FM RADIO • iPOD DOCK/REMOTE

42IN PLASMA TV
HITACHI
42PD9700
★★★☆☆
£2300

FOR
Looks, ergonomic good sense; solid performance; good range of sockets and toys

AGAINST
Its picture isn't going to worry the class-leaders

VERDICT
At this price, the 42PF7200 is a gallant-ish also-ran – find a bargain deal, though, and it comes inching into contention

Hitachi opts for the HD high ground

HITACHI HAS CLEARLY decided to up the ante with its new 'Picture Master HD' range of screens. The company bullishly claims its new 42PD9700 is the first plasma able to display 1080i high definition imagery with no need of image scaling or other processing, thanks to its unusual 1024 x 1080 resolution.

A handsome and well-specified TV, the Hitachi boasts a straightforward remote control and set-up menus that are easy to navigate.

"The 42PD9700 can display 1080i high-def with no image scaling"

The picture has pros and cons, but if you find a good deal, the Hitachi could appeal

Picture adjustment (especially brightness) can be a little heavy-handed, but overall, getting the best from the Hitachi isn't hard.

TV reception from the onboard Freeview tuner is fractionally soft, lacking the sharp edges that really define a picture, and causing some smearing when tracking fast motion. This softness also results in a slight lack of detail in images, but contrasts are handled very well, and there's a natural colour palette.

Perversely, pictures delivered via either of the two HDMI inputs are worse. High definition content and DVD pictures suffer from slight-but-constant picture noise, and motion is tracked woozily.

More positively, the rip-roaring colours and excellent contrast are still in evidence, along with improved levels of detail, and some much more precise edge definition.

Overall, the fact that there's no shortage of competition at this price level, and we can think of a few rival screens that deliver more satisfying pictures. However, the Hitachi's a solid-enough contender: it looks great, boasts neat features (did we mention it has a powered stand?) and performs fairly well.

ALSO CONSIDER

PANASONIC TH42PV500
★★★★★
£2500
April 2006
Great TV pictures and superb HDMI images – among the best pound-for-pound 42in plasmas around

PIONEER PDP-436XDE
★★★★★
£2800
April 2006
A little more money, but worth every penny – vibrant, stable pictures and even worthwhile sound

WIND-UP AM/FM RADIO
ROBERTS
WANDERER
★★★★★
£35

FOR
Go-anywhere ability; surprisingly coherent sound for such a little machine

AGAINST
Needs winding furiously at regular intervals

VERDICT
File under 'brilliantly simple'

Radios can be in tents

IF YOU'RE PLANNING a camping trip, and want access to the radio without shelling out a tenner for a weekend's worth of batteries, then consider the Roberts Wanderer.

It's a compact AM/FM radio that can be powered off the mains, via two AA batteries, or by winding it up in true Trevor Bayliss-style.

Get to grips with the Roberts

Turning the dynamo handle on top of the Wanderer charges the built-in rechargeable battery. A vigorous minute's-worth of winding is supposedly good for 30 minutes' radio reception – though we found it needed considerably longer.

The unit also features a small (but not particularly bright) lamp, and an 'emergency' buzzer that's about as loud as someone whispering "help me, please".

In action, the Wanderer sounds remarkably full-bodied and distinct for such a small, mono design, and it tunes to stations tenaciously in areas with a strong signal – though if you're in the sticks, don't be surprised to lose all but the strongest broadcasts.

Cheap, robust, environmentally sound, and effective – we're more than happy to recommend the Wanderer to any happy campers.

Chunky controls and sturdy construction give the impression it'll go the distance

ALSO CONSIDER

PURE ONE
★★★★★
August 2006 £50
Turn back to p9 and you'll find Pure's great new DAB/FM hybrid. It runs on batteries rather than elbow-grease, though

FREEPLAY DEVO
★★★★☆
January 2006 £100
Another wind-up model, though this one also offers DAB digital radio – at a price!

Dock and remote could lead to lazy listening

APPLE iPOD
UNIVERSAL DOCK
£25
iPOD REMOTE
£19
★★★★

FOR
Good sound; good looks; simple design; S-Video output

AGAINST
Remote functions are limited; you need to spend extra to keep your iPod charged

VERDICT
A straightforward and effective combo – more on it next month

APPLE'S DOCK WORKS with any iPod, and features an iPod-to-USB port for linking to your computer, a mini-jack for piping tunes to a hi-fi, and an S-Video out for send video and images to your TV.

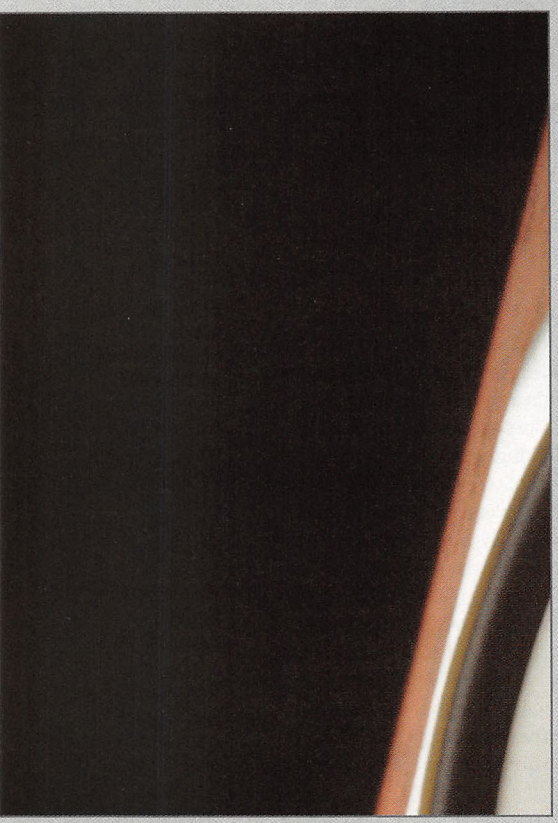
It's a tidier solution than having your iPod lying around, and it can also keep it charged, but only if it's connected to your computer or the optional (£19) USB power supply.

The dock also allows you to use the iPod Remote, which controls volume, stops/plays, and skips on tracks, but can't operate menus.

Via a £20 Monster 3.5mm-to-phono cable, the dock sounds clean and transparent – making these a useful pairing.

Stylish and tidy – dock and remote work well

Listen Up...



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SPEAKER PACKAGES
MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV

RS6-AV, Awards 05

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
★★★★★

RS1, Oct 05
RS6, Sept 05
RSW-12, May 06
RS1-AV, Nov 05

MULTICHANNEL RECEIVER
ARCAM AVR350
★★★★★
£1500

FOR
Exceptional sound performance with music and movies; it's a classy looker

AGAINST
Lacks some handy features, such as HDMI upconversion and auto set-up

VERDICT
Arcam's best-sounding AV receiver has landed

Arcam offers thrills over frills

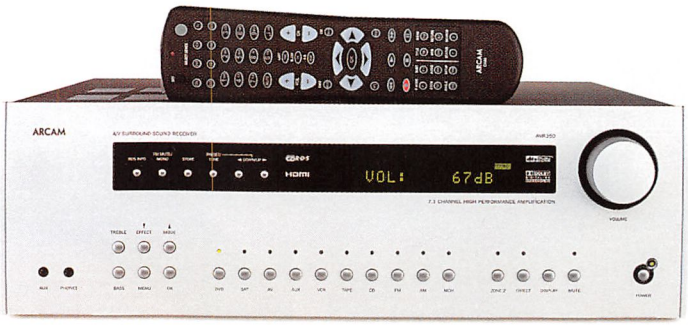
IN THE RACE to fit extra features to the latest home cinema receivers, there's a danger that a key requirement – improvement in sound quality – is forgotten. So, if you bemoan the fact that this latest Arcam doesn't offer HDMI video upconversion, doesn't deliver networking abilities and can't charge your iPod, just remember it does offer possibly the best sub-£2000 home cinema sound around.

And, for the feature-counters, this seven-channel machine does offer a decent spec-list, including HDMI-switching, video upconversion (to interlaced component), independent second-room ability, plus biamping possibilities.

Picture quality shines through

The AVR350 builds on the very solid foundations of the AVR250 and AVR300 machines, helped by some extra components gleaned from higher-end models.

Give it a weekend's run-in, and then spin a blockbuster, perhaps something involving a giant monkey fighting a giant lizard, and the Arcam slaps down a muscular sonic performance, keeping a vice-like grip on the lower stuff and painting a fast, solid, and attention-grabbing sonic canvas that is full-to-bursting with detail. Bangs, crashes and skids flash seamlessly around the surround field, while the rattle of firearms avoids the nasty hard treble of inferior kit.



"Will you miss those features? Ask the same of a Lotus Elise driver"

Realistic-sounding voices balance wonderfully well within the overall tonal presentation, and so this heavyweight amp also delivers more delicate soundtracks like *Amélie*.

Talking of music, even the most ardent of two-channel devotees can't fail to applaud the seven-channel '350's ability with stereo. Even before you get into the world of biamping, it effortlessly manages the complex demands of Massive Attack's *Best of*.

Add stylish design and a learning remote, and you've a fine receiver. But will you miss those features? Ask the same question of a Lotus Elise driver. If you can catch one…

Light on features, yes, but it plays music with panache

ALSO CONSIDER

DENON AVR-4306
★★★★★
£1500
July 06
Denon's chunky box does it all, from surround sound to Ethernet-based networking capability

HARMAN-KARDON AVR700
★★★★½
£1700
Awards 2005
A powerful and dynamic performer that knows the meaning of subtlety, too

DVD RECORDER
PANASONIC
DMR-EZ25
★★★★½
£250

FOR
Fine performance from the digital tuner; excellent compatibility; DVD playback detailed and vibrant

AGAINST
HDMI performance is disappointing; build quality could be better

VERDICT
If you want a fine recorder with a digital tuner, look no further; it's just a shame the HDMI output isn't a bit better

Pana recorder's pros and cons

HOT ON THE heels of the excellent DMR-ES15 comes this, the DMR-EZ25. This bigger brother adds a digital tuner and an HDMI output to the party for an extra £100 outlay. So, is it worth the extra? Well…

First impressions are mixed

Once out of the box, this Panasonic unit looks smart enough, but up close the build quality is nothing special. The layout of the menus and remote are reasonable, though it takes a little time to locate certain key functions and the response can be a tad sluggish.

The Freeview tuner, which brings with it a very useful seven-day electronic programme guide, delivers an impressive, bright and balanced digital picture, which deals excellently with motion and is largely free of any noise.

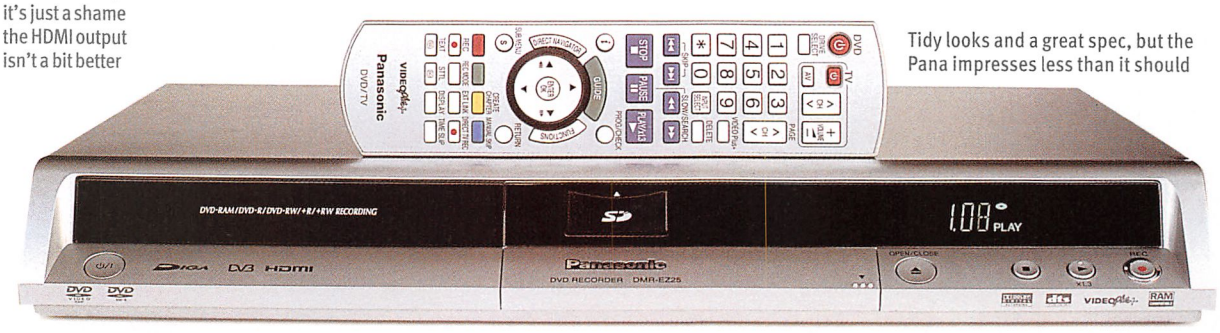
When it comes to recording, the DMR-EZ25 handily supports every DVD disc format going – including dual-layer DVD-R discs and MP3/JPEG files. It also takes SD cards.

"The built-in Freeview tuner has a handy seven-day programme guide"

Recordings in the highest two quality modes are excellent, while the third, which gives four hours recording, introduces some noise and problems with motion. Avoid the lowest-quality mode if you can.

DVDs via the component connections look detailed and natural, giving us little reason to complain. We are, however, slightly disappointed by the performance via HDMI. It should blow our socks off, but it doesn't. It's a little cleaner and colours are a bit more vivid, but there are also hints of noise introduced, while contrast and black detail could be better.

If only this HDMI connection had been better. The digital tuner is fine, and recording excellent, but at £250, and with the £150 model in the shadows, this is a good recorder, but not quite a great one.



Tidy looks and a great spec, but the Pana impresses less than it should

ALSO CONSIDER

PANASONIC DMR-ES15
★★★★½
£150
May 2006
No digital tuner, and it's best-quality connection is component, but it's still superb

PIONEER DVR-433H
★★★★½
£300
December 2005
£50 more, but you do get the added bonus of an 80GB hard disk, which makes life easy

ACOUSTICS

"Sound-per-pound these might be the best speakers we've ever heard."

"Magic little boxes"

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION

★★★★★

1010 Model. July 2006

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Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 5GZ United Kingdom
www.armourhe.co.uk **info@armourhe.co.uk**

32IN LCD TV
ACER
AT3205-DTV
★★★★☆
£ 900

FOR
Nice looks, great price; composed HD images and tidy TV reception

AGAINST
Looks big with the speakers attached; picture can be noisy and vague

VERDICT
A qualified success, but a success nonetheless: the Acer has a lot to recommend it and there are deals around

Affordable Acer LCD is a steal

BETTER KNOWN FOR its PC monitors, the Acer brand alone isn't going to grab the attention of the passing TV-customer-at-large. However, that price is going to attract some interest – we have tested cheaper 32in LCDs (check out the £700 Dual or £850 Sharp in our *Buyer's Guide*), but not many currently break under that £1000 barrier.

Who ate all the pies?

Our first impression was that this flat TV is a bit of a porker, but the Acer's speakers (which add considerably to the impression of bulk) can be removed – this done, the AT3205 becomes a much more svelte (and quieter) proposition.

Set-up menus are logical, rapid and straightforward, while the remote might be a swine to navigate in the dark, but it's a cut above the poverty-sticks many firms supply. You'll be into the menus quickly, too: the Acer is quite extraordinarily overdriven colour-wise when it comes out of the box, but when it's trimmed to your satisfaction, there's lots to admire in the AT3205's picture quality. Via the built-in digital tuner, TV reception has natural colours, a fine facility with bright white scenes, and an impressive degree of rigour to motion-tracking.

Built-in digital and analogue tuners provide good images

"A DVD via HDMI looks composed, stable and tidy, with decent detail"

DVDs via the HDMI input are composed, stable and tidy, and are presented with decent detail.

Problems? Well, the Acer can't fully banish picture noise, even with high def, and contrast in dark scenes can be wanting. All images also have a certain old-school LCD 'just beneath the surface' quality.

Despite the faults, this is still a decent telly, and if you can find a bargain price, it's worth a look.

ALSO CONSIDER

TOSHIBA 32WLT66
★★★★★
£1200
May 2006
Great spec, superb performance and a reassuring brand, too – fine value

LOEWE CONCEPT L32
★★★★★
£1500
November 2005
More expensive, but a very fine performer. HD images are wonderful

STEREO SPEAKERS
TRIANGLE
ALTEA ESW
★★★★★
£ 795

FOR
Big boxes with a big sound at a sensible price

AGAINST
Treble refinement could be better

VERDICT
One of the most entertaining speakers you can buy at this price

Now, that's entertainment

Large metal plinths and five floor spikes each give the sound real solidity

VALUE, THAT'S WHAT these Triangles are all about. For your £795 you get a large, decently finished cabinet populated by a trio of well-engineered drive units and finished-off by a sizeable metal plinth. Five, yes, five floor spikes complete the deal, and offer improved support over the quartet most speakers have.

Careful partnering please

This is a true three-way design, which is rare at this price, and promises superior performance due to the use of optimised bass and midrange units. Don't get too hung up on technicalities, mind, because it's the sound that counts.

These floorstanders aren't perfect: they're not as open nor as refined as the best at this price level. Partner them without care and the treble will be coarse and a little detached. However, get it right and these Triangles reward you with such a lively, dynamic sound that you'll happily forget about everything else and concentrate on enjoying the music. The Alteas thrive with the likes of Massive Attack's *Angel*, which they play at high volumes without strain. Bass, and plenty of it, is on the menu – as are speed and articulation. These speakers don't get fazed by complexity, either, and will keep a grip on low-level detail no matter how demanding the sonic fireworks get.

Move to something that requires more finesse, such as Eric Whitacre's *Cloudburst*, and the Alteas continue to impress, casting a wide, deep soundstage and populating it with solid, believable performers. These are speakers that concentrate the mind on the music and their character, such as it is, is easily ignored once they're working well.

"Bass, and plenty of it, is on the menu – as are speed and articulation"

If you want an analysis tool, buy something else, because these Triangles are too uneven for that. However, if you want entertainment they're a great buy.

ALSO CONSIDER

EPOS M22
★★★★★
£949
June 2005
Floorstanders that are dynamic and articulate, but lack the authority of the Triangles

DALI IKON 6
★★★★★
£899
September 2005
Fast and insightful, though don't have the rhythmic precision of the Triangles

DAB/MP3 PLAYER
MORPHY RICHARDS
★★☆☆☆
£ 140

FOR
Hybrid design for those who want MP3 and DAB in one unit

AGAINST
Cheap build; thin sound; expensive

VERDICT
A noble attempt to create an interesting product, but just isn't very good

Morphy DAB/MP3 out of tune

A PORTABLE DAB handheld radio seems like a pretty good idea, though whether DAB's sonic strengths are audible when you're out on the move is a question worth considering. But adding MP3-playing capability to a DAB portable? Now that strikes us as a very good idea indeed...

However, the best laid plans of mice, men and consumer electronics firms 'oft go awry', as Robert Burns would probably have said had he just spent the day in a dark room listening intently to MP3s of Satie's *Nocturnes* and *I Predict A Riot* by the Kaiser Chiefs: that's right, we're sad to report that this experiment is not a roaring success.

"Paper-thin treble and undynamic sound left us less than enthralled"

The Morphy Richards carries 256MB of memory for your MP3s, and packs in both DAB and FM tuners. Yet straight from the box the DAB MP3 player exudes a feeling of low-budget compromise – despite costing £30 more than one of Apple's 1GB iPod nanos.

'Unfair comparison', we hear you cry, as we all know the nano isn't a DAB radio. Yet in terms of build, user interface and overall quality, we can't help feeling this unit should by rights cost just a fraction of what the miles-slicker-and-frankly-miles-better Nano would set you back.

Uninspiring to hear

DAB radio performance borders on the reasonable, but the paper-thin treble and a bland, un-dynamic presentation compare badly with radio rivals that cost a fair bit less.

MP3 performance is worse. Admittedly, the supplied headphones are dreadful and a better pair might just have scraped the Morphy Richards a more respectable three stars. But by the time we found ourselves testing it wearing a pair of £90 Grados, we realised we were entering the realm of the ridiculous and were forced to admit that this unit simply isn't very good.

Radio and MP3 functionality makes portable sense – but sound disappoints

ALSO CONSIDER

PURE DIGITAL POCKETDAB1000
★★★★★
£110
Jan 04
This go-anywhere companion has style in spades and the sound is impressive, too

ROBERTS R9988
★★★★★
£50
July 04
So, this little handheld might be analogue-only, but it offers a stunning sound for the money

iPOD SPEAKERS
KLIPSCH
IGROOVE
★★★☆☆
£ 200

FOR
Decent design; strong build; usable with non-Apple MP3 players; enthusiastic performance

AGAINST
Unimpressive finish; slightly overbearing bass performance; treble can get thin

VERDICT
The iGroove is a reasonably appealing product, but there are similarly-priced rivals that ooze a greater degree of class

Klipsch gets groovy but loses the beat

ONCE THE iPOD became the gadget icon of a generation, it was inevitable people would want to use it as more than just a portable. Hence the vast plethora of iPod docks now available, from the simple, 'just add hi-fi' docking stations to complete, mini system-style units with on-board stereo amplification and speakers.

A bit short on subtlety

The iGroove from Klipsch is of the latter group: it's a neat, one-piece unit with a pleasing ergonomic curve to the casework. It's fairly well built, though the silver paint job doesn't actually do its appearance any favours – several of the iGroove's rivals look a lot classier.

That said, the Klipsch has a lot going for it: there's a neat little remote from which you can control volume and flick through tracks. It also has a handy feature for owners of other, non-Apple products – an extra 'J-Cup' adaptor which allows you to use it with just about any other MP3 player on the market. The curved fascia conceals twin 6.5cm fibre-composite mid/bass drivers and 25mm tweeters. The unit caters for every type of Apple player, from the Shuffle to the 60GB iPod.

"The performance is enthusiastic – and it also goes pretty loud"

The performance is enthusiastic and, it goes pretty loud. However, this isn't the most subtle of speaker systems: the bloated bass and thin treble create a sound that easily becomes messy and dense – and the subtleties of a tune get lost in the sonic jungle. Therefore, the iGroove gets an average three stars.

The iGroove speaker system's curved design conceals an impressive spec

ALSO CONSIDER

AUDICA MPS-1
★★★★★
£250
June 2006
Great looks and a very smart performance that puts most MP3 player-compatible rivals to shame

MONITOR AUDIO i-DECK
★★★★★
£200
May 2006
Award-winning iPod dock last year, it's still a great buy

10% online discount

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on new policies

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Liverpool Victoria

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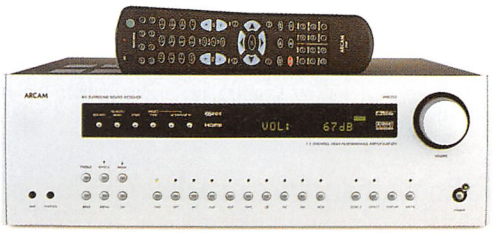
Best buys

8/2006

Just starting on the road to your first cinema or hi-fi system? Here's our guide to **what you'll need**, using the hottest equipment you can buy



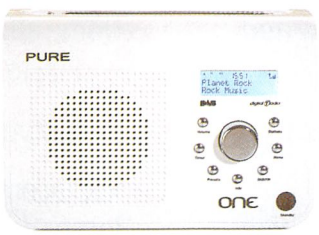
NEW ENTRY

We've often recommended this Arcam receiver's predecessors because of their great sound with movies *and* music, with the proviso that most rivals pack more features. Well, the AVR350 sounds even better, but still doesn't have an auto set-up! See p22.

NEW ENTRY

Regular readers will need little introduction to Pioneer's plasma range, as the company has been winning tests and picking up gongs with almost tedious regularity. But there's nothing boring about the new 1080p-capable PDP5000EX, which boasts the best flatscreen picture we've ever seen. Still not convinced it's worth £6000? Turn to p6 for more.

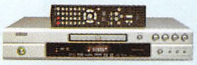
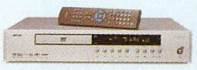
NEW ENTRY



It seems DAB specialist, Pure isn't happy with selling shedloads of its Award-winning Evoke digital radios. It wants to win the hearts, minds and smaller budgets of those who pick up a supermarket-special DAB radio for half the price. Enter the £50 One, a cracking little DAB/analogue hybrid that deserves to be flying off the shelves. Read all about it on p9.

HOME CINEMA ESSENTIALS

WELCOME TO THE very best movie kit money can buy – whatever your budget. Whether you're after a whole new system or just one component, here are the building blocks for premium performance

£	DVD PLAYERS	RECEIVERS	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM DVD player £80 Multichannel receiver £330 Speaker package £500 Television £1100 **£2010**	 TOSHIBA SD-360E ★★★★★ £80 Performance via HDMI or component are both wonderful at this price, and it plays DivX files, too. It's a brilliant player	 DENON AVR-1906 ★★★★★ £330 Another Award-winning home-cinema receiver from the masters, Denon. You can't buy better sound for this money	 WHARFEDALE DIAMOND 9 HCP ★★★★★ £500 Now a double Award winner. Its traditional looks combine with sensational performance
MIDRANGE SYSTEM DVD player £250 Multichannel receiver £500 Speaker package £1900 Television £2800 **£5450**	 DENON DVD-1920 ★★★★★ £250 This year's DVD Product of the Year, the Denon plays just about every music and movie disc format incredibly well	 YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE ★★★★★ £500 Another Product of the Year – Yamaha's UK-tuned home cinema amp powers out movies in a detailed, definite way	 MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV ★★★★★ £1900 Make that three Products of the Year! It's easy to see and hear why MA's package won this year: it looks and sounds classy
HIGH-END SYSTEM DVD player £1000 Multichannel receiver £1500 Speaker package £3750 Projector £3500 **£9750**	 ARCAM DV79 ★★★★★ £1000 A world-class DVD player with a cracking picture – especially via HDMI. Also plays CDs incredibly well. A superb all-rounder	 ARCAM AVR350 ★★★★★ £1500 Arcam adds a big brother to its range of cinema receivers, which are also remarkably adept with all kinds of music	 PROAC STUDIO/RESPONSE ★★★★★ £3750 This mix'n'match system from ProAc looks wrong on paper, but – golly! – does it sound right. Big, too, but make space for it

HOME CINEMA OPTIONS

£	DIGITAL RECORDERS	COMPACT SPEAKERS	FULL-SIZE SPEAKERS
BUDGET	Panasonic TU-CTH100 £250	KEF KHT1005 £300	Epos ELS3 5.1 £956
MIDRANGE	Sony RDR-GX510 £400	B&W MT-20 £975	Monitor Audio RS6 AV £1900
HIGH-END	Sony RDR-HXD910 £700	B&W MT-30 £1575	B&W 805S/HTM4S/ ASW825 £5750

£	PROJECTORS	SUBWOOFERS	VIDEO CABLES
BUDGET	InFocus 4805 £800	Wharfedale Diamond SW150 £250	QED Sqart 2110 £30
MIDRANGE	Panasonic PT-AE900 £1500	Monitor Audio RS W12 £650	QED QUNEX P-CV1 (component) £45
HIGH-END	SIM2 HT 300 E £6000	B&W PV1 £950	QED Qunex HDMI-P £58

DISPLAYS

LOEWE CONCEPT L26

★★★★★

£ 1100

This HD-Ready 26in LCD TV won its *Group Test* in May with its blend of magnificent ability and superb styling

PIONEER PDP-436XDE

★★★★★

£ 2800

Winner of our Award for best 40in+ flat TV, this HD-Ready, 43in Pioneer plasma is a must-see, big-screen stunner

PROJECTIONDESIGN

★★★★★

£ 3500

This compact HD-Ready design comes in several colours (if you don't fancy the orange) – all have a picture to die for

LOOK!

Clearer Audio Silverline
A good mains cable gives your system the ultimate chance to excel, and this is one of the best, worth every penny of its £150

ALL IN ONE BOX

Sony DAV-DZ500F
£450

Philips LX7500R
£750

Denon SmartLife S-301
£1250

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Get smart
Use our tests and *Buyer's Guide* to learn more about the products and technologies that can boost your sound and vision. It pays to be spec-savvy: you'll buy better kit for your money. Set a rough budget, too

2 Try before you buy
Make sure your planned purchases meet your exact needs: arrange to audition them in a retailer's demo room or during a home trial, not on the shop floor when you can't get to know them

BUYER'S GUIDE £

3 Use your own discs to compare kit
Improving your system is about getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning your favourite DVDs and CDs will help you see and hear how individual components or systems compare

Every verdict starting p91

4 Value is about more than price
Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package – will the retailer be there to help you?

"Sound-per-pound, these £100 Q Acoustics 1010s might be the best speakers we've ever heard. Magical"

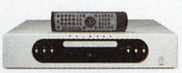
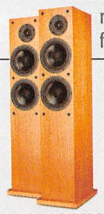
RATINGS EXPLAINED

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION'S world-respected star ratings are awarded on a performance-per-pound basis: it's not enough for a product to be great, it's got to be great-value, too. Five-star ratings are awarded to the class-leaders, but four-star products are also well worth considering – they might not have the all-round ability of the very best, but they're still superior products and could be better for your system

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

HI-FI ESSENTIALS

MAKE THE MOST of your music with our supreme selection of hi-fi systems and separates. Our three set-ups below help you build a core CD system, to which you can add any option – from vinyl to DAB to MP3

£	CD PLAYERS	AMPLIFIER	SPEAKERS
BUDGET SYSTEM CD player £250 Amplifier £350 Speakers £150 **£750**	 CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640CV2 ★★★★★ £ 250 Cambridge Audio's Award-winning Azurs are classy hi-fi on a budget, as this top player shows	 ROTEL RA-05 ★★★★★ £ 350 A replacement for the wonderful RA-02 model, this is a blinding-quality stereo amp. Your music deserves hi-fi this good	 MORDAUNT-SHORT AVANT MS902i ★★★★★ £ 150 Sensational speakers for the money – no wonder they recently dethroned the Award-winners
MIDRANGE SYSTEM CD player £650 Amplifier £650 Speakers £400 **£1700**	 CYRUS CD6s ★★★★★ £ 650 CD player Product of the Year – never has such awesome musicality been so affordable. Thank you, Cyrus!	 ROKSAN KANDY L.III ★★★★★ £ 650 This is a superb upgrade to an already respected amp: this is a great reminder of what quality hi-fi should sound like	 KEF iQ5 ★★★★★ £ 400 Completing the trio is another Product of the Year – floorstanders with real flair from KEF
HIGH-END SYSTEM CD player £1500 Amplifier £1500 Speakers £1400 **£4400**	 PRIMARE D31 ★★★★★ £ 1500 This best-in-class Award winner hits the spot in all the right places with its detailed, forceful sound. A superb CD player	 PRIMARE I30 ★★★★★ £ 1500 Another Award-winning Primare, this amp offers detail, dynamics and timing in abundance. It's a must-listen	 PROAC STUDIO 140 ★★★★★ £ 1400 These Award winners are the perfect partners for the Primare pairing. Simple but highly effective speakers

HI-FI OPTIONS

£	TURNTABLES	DAB RADIOS	SYSTEMS
BUDGET	Pro-ject Debut III £130	Pure Evoke 1-XT £100	Goodmans 1104 DAB £90
MIDRANGE	Clearaudio Emotion £655	Pure Evoke 2-XT £150	Yamaha M170 £300
HIGH-END	Wilson Benesch Full Circle £2100	Denon TU-1800DAB £250	Arcam Solo £1000

£	MP3	HEADPHONES	CABLES
BUDGET	Apple iPod Shuffle FROM £69	Sennheiser PX100 £30	QED Silver Anniversary XT £5.50/m
MIDRANGE	Apple iPod nano FROM £139	Grado SR60 £90	Merlin Chopin £85
HIGH-END	Apple iPod 60GB £299	Grado SR325i £310	Clearer Audio Copperline £50

GEAR4 CASES
iPod screens can be a right pain to keep scratch-free. Luckily, Gear4 knows it, too. That's why it's made this classy leather case for iPod videos and nanos. It's called the LeatherJacket, and offers a strong leather outer shell and a soft velvet lining to both pamper and protect. It's available in pink, black or white for £20. Check out *www.gear4store.com*

CORRECTION
In our June issue, we wrote that Pioneer's VSX-AX4AVi lacked HDMI switching. That's a mistake: this multichannel receiver has two HDMI inputs and a single output.

CABLES SLASHED
Roll up, roll up, get your Nordost cables. It's offering up to 40% off some of its best selling interconnects and speaker cables, such as the Red Dawn speaker cable, above.

What's new?

LATEST PRODUCTS **INSIDE INFO**

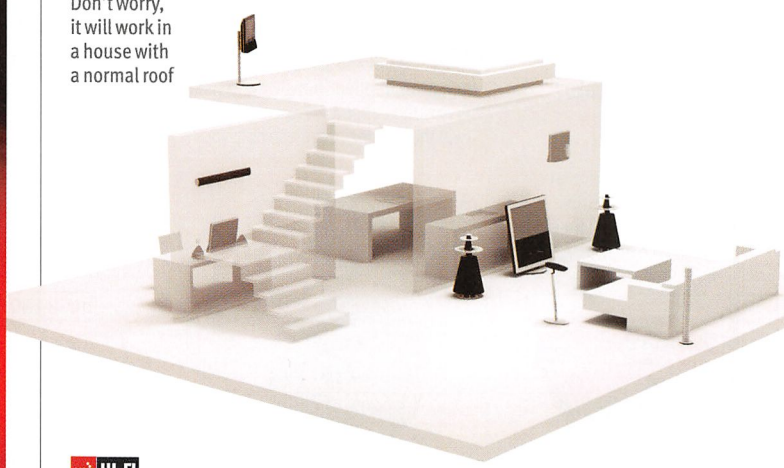
Philips beams up a slimscreen TV range

PHILIPS HAS GIVEN its range a makeover and the results look fine. The sexy LCD number shown above is the 42PF9831D, and this TV comes with a full helping of Philip's vision enhancing Ambilight feature. The £3500 set delivers light effects from all four sides, and the actual picture should also catch the eye: the TV engine's spec includes Picture Plus 3 HD, ClearLCD, a digital tuner and the screen's 1366 x 768 resolution is ready for HD TV. Add twin HDMI inputs, five speakers, and you've got (on paper) some seriously tempting spec – look out for our September issue review where we'll tell you (on paper) just how tempting is the real thing.

"A digital tuner, twin HDMI inputs and five speakers: tempting!"

The company is also releasing a new 37in LCD TV, the £2500 37PF9731D. Plasma fans should try out the 42PF9631D, which uses a 1024 x 1080 ALiS panel and is Philip's first plasma to add the Pixel Plus 2 HD picture system. Costing £2300, it's out now.

The 32PF9631D replaces last years Award-winning LCD TV, the lovely 32PF9830, so has lots to live up to – while the ultra-slim 250GB DVDR3460H DVD recorder looks the part, and the £400 HTS6510 HCIB promises 5.1 from 2.1. Last but not least, the excellent WACS700 wireless micro system gets an extra 40GB and an extra 'o' on its model number. The lucky thing...



Don't worry, it will work in a house with a normal roof

HI-FI

B&O'S WIRELESS WONDER WORLD

IF YOU ENJOY filling all 21 rooms of your mansion with beautiful music, but your butler's sick of lugging around your heavy sound system and you don't particularly want to drill holes through your walls, then Bang & Olufsen has a solution, in the form of the BeoLink Wireless 1.

B&O claims that the indoor transmission range between receiver and transmitter is 30m "without deterioration in quality". It works with BeoLab speakers, which receive their signal from a remote IR eye on the 2.4GHz band, which B&O promises will be robust against interference from many of the other appliances and gadgets that use the bandwave.

A single transmitter can service up to seven rooms (seven pairs of loudspeakers), which would probably just about cover the Chelsea town house. However, for the country manor you'd want the system's full capability of three transmitters and a total of 21 pairs of speakers. The Beolink Wireless 1 will cost you £535 for the first room, and £281 for every room after that, and is available now from Bang & Olufsen stores.

COMING SOON...

12TH JUNE

Peaches is completely barking – and as foul-mouthed as they come (you've been warned), but she's far more than just a novelty grunge act obsessed with 'gender identity'. Isn't she? This album's called *Impeach My Bush*.

13TH JUNE

He might not want us to use the word, but this is indeed a 'solo' album from Thom Yorke. Unless the Radiohead frontman makes a major departure from previous form, *The Eraser* should be a cracking test of detail.

26TH JUNE

Based on a classic comic strip and set in London, *V For Vendetta* is an allegorical tale that pits our well-spoken masked superhero against the evils of a tyrannical government. Surprisingly coherent.

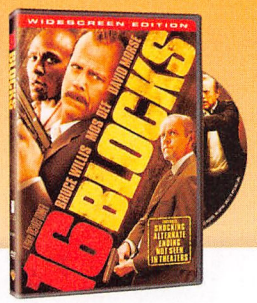
Loewe puts the bling in big-screen TVs

THE LOEWE GIVETH and the Loewe taketh away: just as the company ceases production of the Spheros R37 Masterpiece, it gives us the very bling 32in Individual Edition 1 LCD TV.

The new unit is priced at £5000, is HD-Ready and is bound to make an impressive statement when you bring the in-laws round. It boasts Loewe's Image+ picture processing technology, and includes an integrated Freeview tuner and the option to include a built in hard-disk recorder for an extra £300. There are two colour options, and, knowing Loewe, both will look extremely flash. You can have a black body with dark crystal side inlay panels, or a silver body with light crystal inlay panels. But you'd better be quick. Available now, Loewe is only manufacturing 2000 in a limited-edition run, and only 50 of these will be coming over to the UK. Loewe, it seems, just don't giveth us enough.

"You better be quick – Loewe is only making 2000 of these, with just 50 coming to the UK"

Even standard Loewes exude style, so these should be class



DEAL OF THE MONTH

The latest Bruce Willis actioner, *16 Blocks*, has only just hit the cinemas here in the UK, but Stateside viewers are already enjoying the DVD. And so can you if you order the Region 1 DVD. CD Wow (*www.cd-wow.com*) can oblige with a £13.99 deal for the disc and delivery. Yippee-ki-yay!

Fret not, you don't need to keep the screen at this angle

HOME CINEMA

SONY SCREEN SWIVELS ON THE SPOT

NO SOONER HAD we packed-up this month's portable DVD player test, than Sony announced its own new contribution to the roster. The DVP-FX810 comes with an 8in LCD screen with the added ability of being able to rotate through 180 degrees, which is nice. Setting you back £250, the Sony boasts two headphone inputs, compatibility with a wealth of DVD disc formats and DivX and runs on two AA batteries.

MP3

JVC'S ALL NEW ALNEO PLAYERS

Both models are available in four different colours... nice

JVC HAS ANNOUNCED two new models for its Alneo range of digital audio players. And very smart they look, too. The XA-F107 is the larger of the two models, sporting a 1GB hard disk, while the XA-F57 offers 512MB of Flash memory, meaning room for roughly 250 and 125 tracks respectively. Both support MP3 and WMA files and are loaded using simple 'drag and drop'. Both players also include line-in connections allowing for direct encoding from a source. Also new from JVC are Gummy in-ear headphones and the SP-A220 speakers for a complete portable music system. The XA-F107 and XA-F57 are both available now and will set you back £100 and £70 respectively. Look for a review soon...

3RD JULY

This movie explores the background to the writing of Truman Capote's literary masterpiece *In Cold Blood*, a true account of a brutal Kansas multiple murder. Oscar-winner Philip Seymour Hoffman steals the show.

10TH JULY

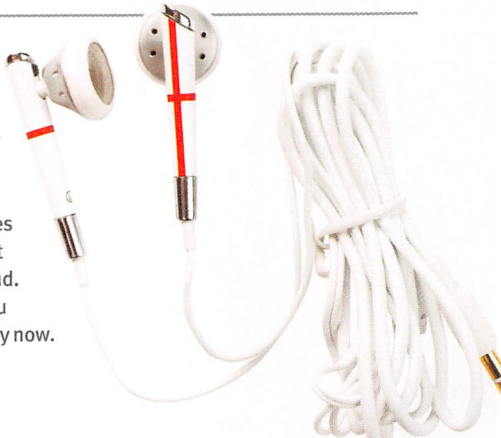
Syriana is like the News-night of action movies, educating as it entertains. Plus you get to see George Clooney with a beard and a paunch, looking a little like Captain Haddock. Priceless, and essential.

24TH JULY

Felicity Huffman, (*Desperate Housewives*) plays a transsexual making her way across America with her son before the final snip. Superb acting helps make *Transamerica* a superior road-trip film.

MP3

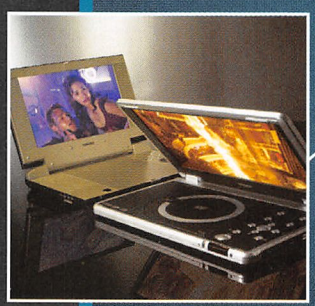
IXOS GETS IN THE SPIRIT

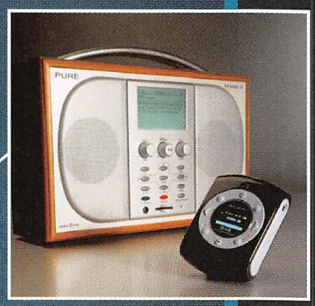


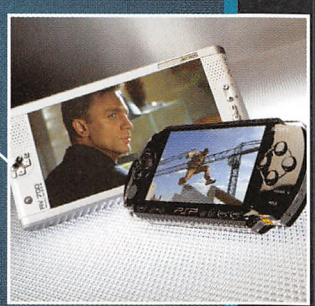
At the time of writing we're not quite sure whether we'll want to remember this year's World Cup but, fingers crossed, we will. So, here's a pair of special-edition St George headphones from Ixos to celebrate, or if you're just feeling particularly patriotic and proud. The XMI207 in-ear phones will set you back just £10, and are available to buy now.

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO MP3

iPODS • MP3 PLAYERS • MULTIMEDIA JUKEBOXES
PORTABLE DVD • DAB RADIOS • MULTIROOM MUSIC







ON SALE JULY 6

WHSmith

Subject to availability at selected WHSmith stores

Watch out! It's showtime again

IT'S THAT TIME again! Yes, the WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION Show 2006 is fast approaching. As ever, it promises to be the only place to be if you want to keep up with all things hi-fi and home cinema. The number of manufacturers already committed to exhibiting is already impressive, as you can see from the list on the right, with many more set to follow. The vital information is as follows: 3rd-5th November, Novotel London West, Hammersmith. For more information trot along to the website at *www.whathifishow.co.uk*, or ring 0870 161 2128 and chat to a friendly so-and-so who'll know all about it. Right, we'll see you there then...

It's showtime! Don't worry, the exhibitors do all the hard work – you just have to turn up!

EXHIBITORS SO FAR

Acoustic Energy
Arcam
Archos
Audica
Audio Partnership
Audiolab
BenQ Siemens
Chord Company
Creative Labs
CSE
Cyrus
Dali
Duo Acoustics
Fujitsu
Henley Designs
KEF
LG Electronics
Mission
Naim
Path/Ixos
Pioneer
Pure Digital
Sennheiser
Shure
Sim2
Sonos
Sony
Supra Cables
Toshiba
Wilson Benesch
Yamaha

HI-FI

PURE'S NEW LOOK FOR AN OLD FAVOURITE

Those imaginatively named finishes in all their glory: very smart, we're sure you'll agree

PURE DIGITAL IS launching a new range of DAB digital radios based on it's Award-winning Pure Evoke-1^{XT} radio. The Prestige range is a 'luxury' version, aimed at the more discerning listener.

The radios come in a new range of wood finishes. The three styles available are bird's eye maple, burnt redwood and piano black. The radios boast FM and DAB signals, as well as an LCD display, which will show song titles, artist information, news updates and sports results.

The radios should hopefully sound every bit as good as the original Evoke models, with the added bonus of the smart, classic styling. Though it's a mono radio, it can be turned into a stereo radio with the addition of an XT-1 speaker.

The Prestige range will be available from this summer, and will cost £120.

It might look like a tub of vaseline, but this widget will turn any object into a speaker

HI-FI

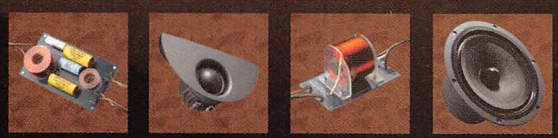
GOOD, GOOD, GOOD VIBRATIONS

WHY DOES EVERYONE love a widget? Probably for the same reason they love magic – because they haven't got a clue how it works.

The mobile technology company, Widget UK, has invented something called the Nimzy Vibro Blaster, which uses patented electro-acoustic technology to transform sonic signals into vibrations. What does that mean? Who knows. Let's not spoil it – what's important is that this portable speaker can produce an impressive 15 watts of sound by turning any flat surface that it's placed on into a speaker. This all sounds rather clever, we're sure you'll agree – how it will actually sound is another thing. The Nimzy Vibro Blaster is compatible with laptops and MP3 players, costs £70, and is available now from *www.widget.co.uk*

EVO²

Hi-Fi and Home Cinema Loudspeaker



Think you've heard it all before? Evo2 by Wharfedale presents a new standard of reproduction with a fast, pin-sharp and powerful performance and a perfectly integrated mid-range for the most natural, detailed and complete delivery you've ever experienced.

Available now in a range of models and real veneer finishes from your Wharfedale approved hi-fi dealer.

Wharfedale

IAG House, Sovereign Court
Ermine Business Park
Huntingdon, Cambs
PE29 6XU

Tel: +44 (0) 1480 447700
www.wharfedale.co.uk

BUMPER-2-BUMPER
Monster has jumped on the bandwagon by releasing the iBumper case for iPod nanos. Complete with clear skins for the front and back, it's available in six colours for £20.

AUCTION ACTION
Those kind-hearted souls at Mordaunt-Short have arranged a charity auction in aid of British Blind Sport. Up for grabs is a specially-made pair of Performance 6 speakers, worth more than £3500. For sale on eBay, see *www.mordauntshort.com/blog.php* for more info.

Not only does the Pocket Theatre boast a 7in screen, digital tuner and three-hour battery life, it also looks cool

WHAT'S NEW?

HOME CINEMA

DIGITAL TV IN YOUR POCKET

IS THAT A theatre in your pocket? It could very well be, thanks to Evesham's new 7in portable widescreen digital LCD TV. The Evesham Pocket Theatre costs £150 and has a 7in, 16:9 widescreen TFT LCD, complete with digital TV tuner. The Pocket Theatre weighs just 520g and comes with a rechargeable battery that provides up to three hours of viewing. It also has a portable aerial, should you find yourself in a poor reception area. The Pocket Theatre comes with an electronic programme guide, too. You can also hook it up to your games console, DVD player or camcorder. Additionally, thanks to the TV-Out connection, you can turn it into a Digital TV receiver for your telly. See *www.lowestonweb.com* for more information.

HIDE YOUR HI-FI
If you like to stick all your kit in an AV cabinet and then forget all about it, the Invisible Control from Marmitek might be for you. The unit will sit on top of your cabinet while your kit is stowed inside, and allows you to operate it remotely without having to have your kit in sight or open the doors. The Invisible Control system has a retail price of £21.

Surround sound from your 'phones – that's what Trust is claiming for these £50 cans

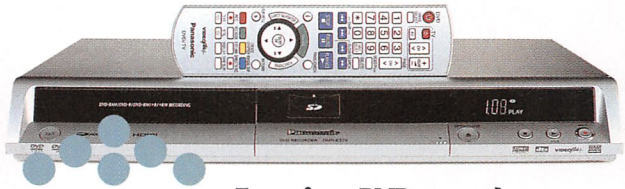
HI-FI

SURROUND FOR 50 POUND

CINEMA SOUND IN your headphones – that's what Trust claims to have achieved with the HS-6200 5.1 Surround USB Headset. Stick it on your head and you'll have three speakers servicing each ear, and a sexy little 'subwoofer boost switch' built into the cable. There's also a microphone, which means you can use the phones for online/LAN gaming sessions that require you to bark orders at your telly like a lunatic. The headset is available to buy now for £50.

SEPTEMBER ISSUE – ON SALE THURS 27TH JULY

Next month



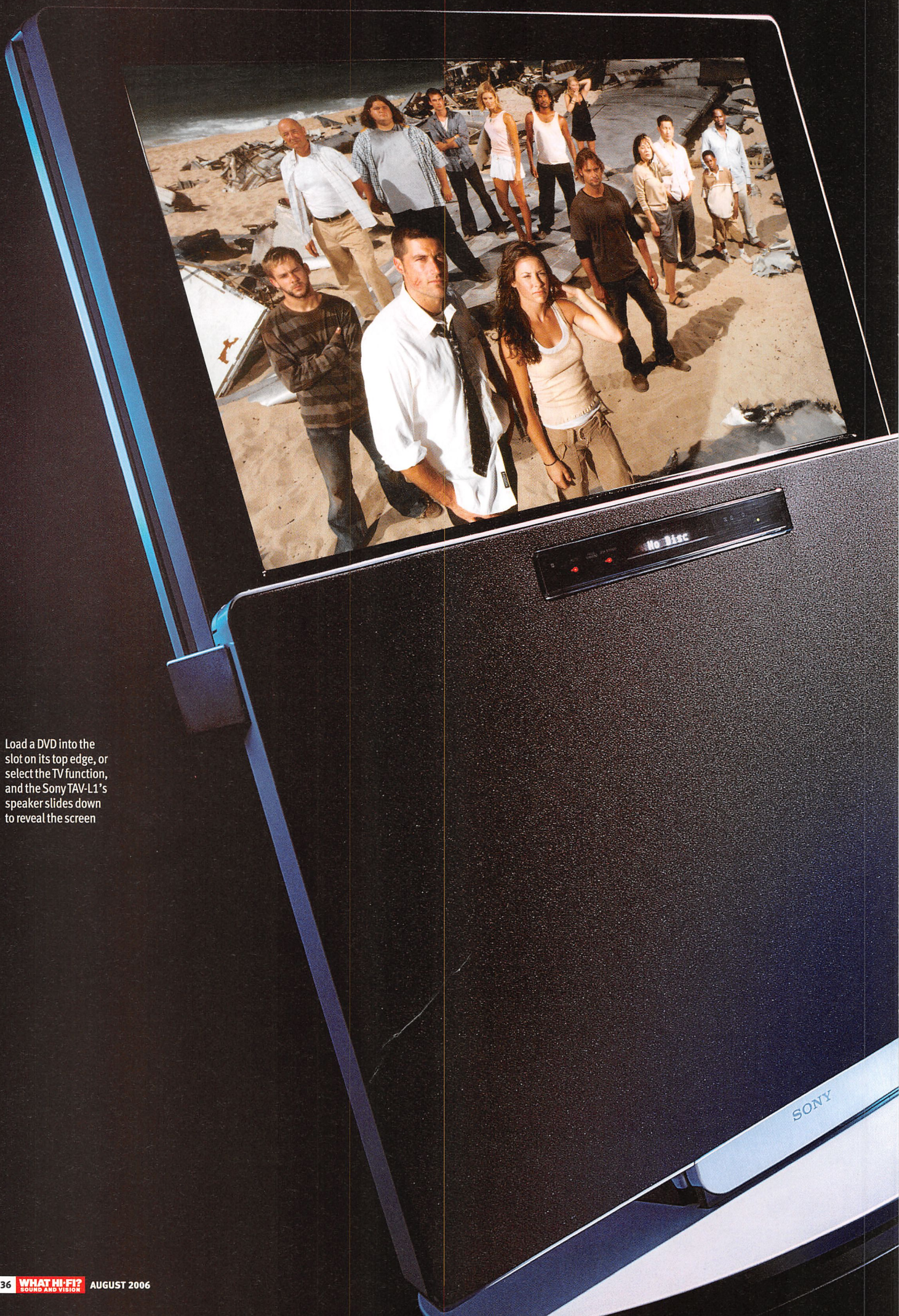
Freeview DVD recorders
One-box convenience and quality to suit every pocket

Budget speaker Supertest
Eight pairs fight it out

First Tests Bursting with the latest flatscreens, in every shape and size

SUBSCRIBE NOW...

IF YOU SUBSCRIBE THIS MONTH, YOU'LL GET A WHOPPING **25% OFF** THE PRICE OF WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION FOR THE FULL STORY **SEE P90**



Load a DVD into the slot on its top edge, or select the TV function, and the Sony TAV-L1's speaker slides down to reveal the screen

NEXT BIG THING

Drop-down gorgeous

Just when you thought you'd seen everything that could be done with TV design, look as Sony's new slab of style

FLATSCREEN TVs HAVE revolutionised the way we look at TV design: in less than a decade the monster in the corner has started to give way to sets you can hang on the wall, just like a picture – a bit like in those old sci-fi movies. But what do you do with all the other gubbins involved in a home entertainment system: the DVD player, the amplification and the speakers? Unless you're very careful, your nice sleek flatscreen can end up surrounded by ill-matched boxes, not to mention a jumble of cables to hook it all up.

Sony's solution is a revolutionary entertainment centre, the first of a whole new range from the company. The Esprit TAV-L1, which sells for around £4000, combines a 32in Bravia LCD TV (last year's model) with a complete SACD/CD/DVD system, using Sony's own S-Force PRO virtual surround system and digital amplification. All that is built into the speaker unit, which covers the screen when you're playing music, and only slides down when you select the TV function or slip a DVD into the slot-loading player on the panel's top edge. A subwoofer is built into the pedestal, and the whole thing is designed to appeal to what Sony calls 'style-tech' customers: those who choose products as much on style as they do on performance. We hope to test it soon...

SONY'S DESIGN CENTRE in London developed the Esprit concept, working together with the engineering team back in Tokyo. And the Esprit range – not to be confused with Sony's past Esprit line-up of high-end audio components – has been designed in association with French company Ligne Roset, which has a history of almost 150 years making everything from its earliest umbrellas and walking sticks to today's high-style furniture and interior design products, mainly the work of young designers. As a result, a number of interchangeable grille-cloths will be available for the TAV-L1's speaker panel, from plain colours (midnight black as shown here, plus mint green, sunset orange and sand cream) to a variety of patterns designed to match, or even contrast with, various interior decor schemes.

This month's *Supertest* sees eight LCD and plasma sets fight it out for the title of best **37in flatscreen TV** – and with prices dropping all the time, and quality rising, it's going to be some scrap...

Supertest

THE UK'S ULTIMATE COMPARATIVE REVIEW **NO.361**

Who will be our 37in flatscreen superheroes?

What's new?

Only two of these TVs have graced these pages before: Viewsonic's cheap-as-chips N3760W flew the budget flag in January, while Panasonic's TH37PX60 provoked an excited *First Test* last month. Panasonic has slipped a more expensive version into its model range, and that's reviewed here along with brand new offerings from big hitters JVC, LG, Loewe, Sharp and Toshiba.

What do you get for your money?

Agreeably, prices are in steep decline. Products that would have cost you an easy £2000 less than 12 months ago are down as low as £1400 now – even less if you shop around for a deal.

Expect very good standard-quality broadcast TV, even better from DVDs, and demand excellence with High Def, too. The best here deliver on all counts.

"Products that would have been £2000 a year ago, now cost you considerably less"

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Does your screen need to see regular service as a TV?
If so, do you need a built-in digital tuner, or are you a Sky/cable/Freeview user? Some of these screens have only analogue tuners, and some are ostensibly optimised to make the most of this country's PAL system, so make sure you know what your priorities are.

2 All of these screens have at least one HDMI input
HDMI is the connection of choice for Sky HD, and some TVs feature a second input to allow you to connect your DVD player/recorder in this way, too. Check that your chosen screen has sufficient socketry to meet your needs.

3 Spend some time setting up your new screen properly
In our experience, flatscreens tend to look extraordinarily vivid straight from the box, and tend to have the contrast whacked right up as well (for the showroom). Tweaking the settings will improve the picture greatly.

JARGON BUSTER

HDMI: The High-Definition Multimedia Interface is the preferred all-digital connection from your HD digibox to your TV screen

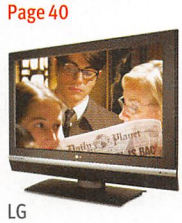
RATINGS EXPLAINED

Only five-star TVs are exemplary quality, covering the fundamentals of build, picture, sound and connectivity with aplomb. Don't discount four-star screens, though – they might excel in just the areas you're interested in. Three stars is not an indictment, but you should be able to do better. You'd be crazy to live with two- or one-star televisions sets.

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother

THE CONTENDERS 37IN FLATSCREEN TVs

JVC
LT-37DR7 £1450
Page 40



LG
37LC2D £1400
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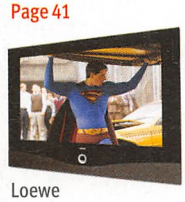

Loewe
Spheros R37 £3000
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Panasonic
TH37PX60 £1850
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Panasonic
TH37PX600 £2150
Page 44

Sharp
LC37P70 £1600
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Toshiba
37WL66 £1550
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Viewsonic
N3760W £1000
Page 48

JVC LT-37DR7

★★★★☆ £1450

How does it look?
Remarkably tidy, thanks to the slim bezel and well-integrated speaker array. Either tuner provides credible off-air pictures, and HDMI images are dramatic. At this price, that's a strong recommendation

How does it sound?
The speakers are cunningly concealed in the neat surround, but they sound a little discreet, too. If you're going to properly enjoy HDTV, consider a surround sound system essential

Can you boost it?
Like the majority of these screens, the default picture settings are designed to grab your attention in the showroom: over-vivid colours, over-brilliant contrast and over-sharp sharpness. One of your DVDs will have a THX set-up chapter – use it!

Is it easy to use?
The remote's good, the set-up instructions are sensible – invest five minutes with the manual and the menus to get the best out of the JVC, making the most of your outlay

"The flexibility of the set-up, and the sensible interface mean the JVC can be giving its best shot in next-to-no time"

IT'S NOT EASY to make a 37in LCD look discreet, but JVC has had a good go with the LT-37DR7. The build and quality of materials is no better than that of most competitors in this *Supertest*, but this JVC's chassis is tidy and attractive – and the screen comes with a tabletop stand.

The LT-37DR7 is giving nothing away ergonomically, either: the remote control is clear and logical and the set-up menus are legible and comprehensive.

"The pictures are most accomplished from a DVD player via an HDMI input"

The flexibility of the set-up, and the sensible interface mean the JVC can be giving its best shot in next-to-no time.

Reception from either the analogue or digital tuner isn't the most successful in the test. In areas, the LT-37DR7 is fiercely competitive: TV pictures enjoy decent depth of field, and colours (especially skintones) are subtle and realistic.

FOR
Composed and enjoyable HDMI pictures; tidy looks, keen pricing

AGAINST
Telly reception's not the best; sound not as expansive as some

VERDICT
Even if it's not yet on an authentic roll, JVC is on an undoubted run of form – this screen warrants serious consideration

However, edge definition lacks some rigour, lending a slightly soft appearance to pictures, and some complicated scenes can provoke shimmer and restlessness. High-contrast pictures surrender a significant amount of detail, too, and fast movement can cause crises.

DVD displays are more impressive

Pictures are more accomplished via a DVD player. RGB Scart images firm up significantly, eradicating the uncertain edges and diminishing picture noise.

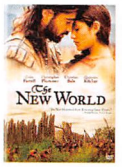
Information received via the HDMI input is even better. The JVC delivers very accomplished 720p pictures: textures and colours are handled deftly and with great vitality, while previously overlooked details abound. There's insight into even the darkest or most complicated scenes, movement is tracked tenaciously, and picture noise is reduced to virtually nil.

The LT-37DR7 also sounds its best via the HDMI socket: there's reasonable separation and nice distinct dialogue, even if the JVC can't muster much meaningful action toward the bottom end of the frequency range.

It's not difficult to identify the LT-37DR7, along with its 32in sibling tested in June, as the most competitive offerings from JVC in a good while. It's not the class-leader, but it's a valid alternative – if you find a deal, investigate it.

Test it with

The New World



Terence Malick is revered among cineastes of a certain bent, and this ambitious, dreamlike rewriting of *Pochahontas* is exactly why he deserves such admiration. Nature has a powerful starring role here, deity-like in its power, and this JVC set's facility with movement and colour makes this a sumptuous visual treat. Don't expect the soundtrack to match the visuals, though – there's nothing like the required substance from the JVC's built-in speakers.

LG 37LC2D

★★★★☆ £1400

Will it suit your room?
This LG LCD TV is a sophisticated looker, and does away with the visual bulk of some of its competitors. The price is keen, but no decorative sacrifices need be made when decision-time comes

How does it look?
The picture doesn't cover itself with glory where TV reception is concerned, erring on the slightly soft and noisy side. HDMI images, by contrast, are alive with detail, and handle movement and contrasts well

Is it built to last?
On top of the classy looks, the 37LC2D feels well screwed together and enjoys a better-than-average remote control. It's certainly not going to shake apart any time soon

Analogue or digital?
The analogue tuner is a definite weak link, given to more noise and less grip than we'd like. The Freeview tuner offers a little more stability – and more channels – but is still no better than average

"This 37in LG LCD set is provided with a mercifully straightforward remote control, and is simplicity itself to set up properly"

IT'S PLEASING TO report that there isn't a single screen in this test that's actively unattractive – but, to our eyes, only the Loewe is a better-looking product than this one. Black is the new black, after all, and the 37LC2D wears its bulk well. So the LG's a winner when it's turned off – what's the performance like?

The TV picture the LG receives via its digital tuner is generally acceptable, even if it exhibits some of the classic

"Black is the new black, after all, and the 37LC2D wears its bulk really well"

LCD flaws. The 37LC2D certainly has a winning colour palette: skintones are believable, intense reds and oranges remain composed, and even high-contrast scenes can't unsettle the LG.

Movement and edge definition don't cause too many alarms, either – though severely testing scenes can provoke some shimmer and dot-crawl along edges. There's a serving of deep-field picture noise in most images, though, and the same softness and faint lack of detail that each LCD here evidences to one degree or another.

Fortunately, the LG rids itself of the bulk of these problems when delivering images from a DVD player. Analogue pictures via the RGB scart input are altogether better marshalled than TV pictures – depth of field noise quietens, edges gain some necessary stability, and movement is tracked with greater authority. A switch to 720p pictures via the all-digital HDMI input brings further benefits: high-contrast scenes can't throw the 37LC2D, which differentiates competently, and insight into black or very dark pictures is much improved over the analogue signal.

FOR
Good looking, well spec'd, and sturdily made; fine movie performance; some off-air plus-points

AGAINST
Some off-air gripes; can't draw edges as well as the best

VERDICT
The price is right, and the performance isn't far behind – the latest LG range is its best yet

Simple set-up makes life easy

It should be apparent that this LG is a screen with a lot going for it. It's worth noting, too, that the 37LC2D is provided with a mercifully straightforward remote control, and is simplicity itself to set up. Like a lot of competing products, it's not the greatest television in the world – but it's far from being the worst.

The market being what it is, this LG should be available for a fair bit less than the price that opens this review. If you can find this LG decently discounted, you should definitely give it an audition.

Test it with

Lucky Number Slevin

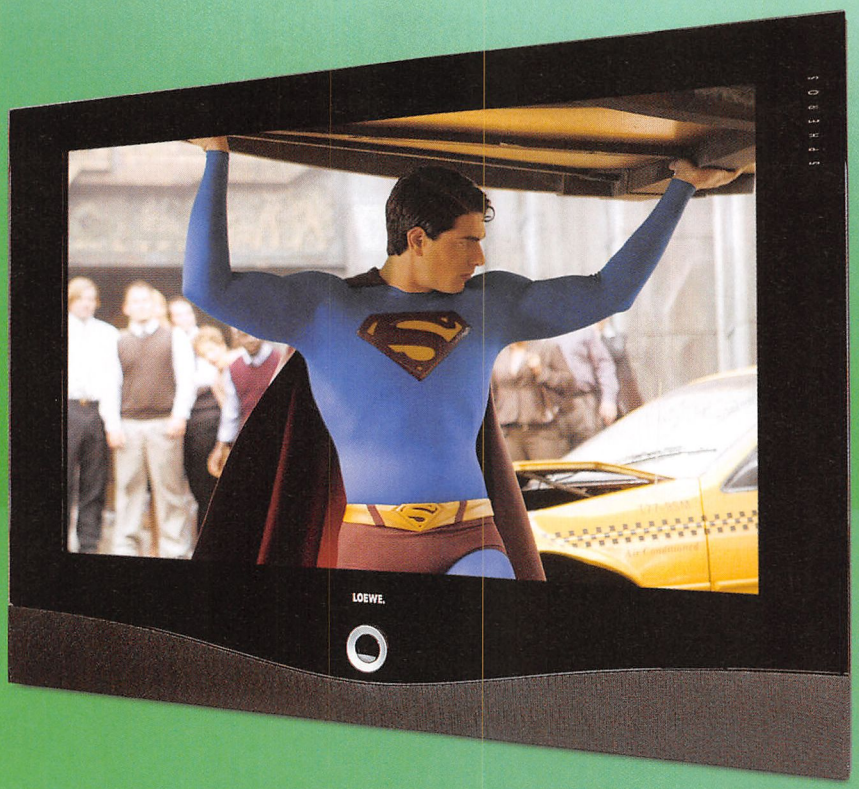
Not half as clever as it thinks it is, Paul McGuigan's 'Tarantino Lite' noir thriller has a high-rolling cast and a pointlessly convoluted plot. Thanks to the LG's ability with fine-detail and low-light insight, the lovely cinematography is translated intact; the big set-pieces, sudden outbreaks of violent movement (and indeed, violence) are gripped smoothly and effectively. Ignore the big signposts in the plot, the telegraphing of the 'twist' at the end, and revel instead in the superbly balanced picture.

Loewe Spheros R37

★★★☆☆ £3000

Will it suit your room?
Will it ever. There's no competition in this group: the Loewe looks and feels several cuts above. As long as you don't object to regularly flicking the duster about, that super-high gloss black will offer a glow the rest of your decorating can bask in

How does it look?
Sadly, the Loewe's picture doesn't match its physical allure. It can extract plenty of detail and generates inky black, but movement often flummoxes it



What does it offer?
You mean apart from a trip along the line between satisfied and smug? Well, a second HDMI input would be nice, but it's fully-spec'd otherwise, and comes with the most tactile remote of the lot

Is it easy to use?
The remote and set-up menus are every bit as elegant as the screen itself; the pop-off panel at the rear that masks the connections is also well thought-out

"Unlike the best, the Spheros set suffers a metaphorical panic attack when it comes to tracking motion or delivering sharp edges"

YOU'D BE FORGIVEN a double-take at the price. The flatscreen market is on an inexorable downward curve, price-wise, and the Loewe looks ludicrously expensive in this company. However, Loewe has a deep understanding of premium products – and this Spheros R37 is a case in point.

This screen looks, feels and operates far more luxuriously than any other in this test. You might pay top dollar, but

"This set looks, feels and operates more luxuriously than any other tested here"

it's immediately obvious where the money's gone and, by extension, what a purchaser's priorities are.

This TV is a tactile and visual delight as a piece of furniture. The remote feels good, too – though a bit fiddly – and the set-up menus are a paradigm of good sense. So far, there's nothing to suggest this Loewe is wildly overpriced.

FOR
Classy, glossy looks and finish; accomplished sound; excellent picture detail

AGAINST
Queasy motion-tracking; expensive

VERDICT
Our priorities are always value for money, and the Loewe doesn't add up – a lovely object, though

Like many other screens here, this LCD TV's performance is by no means perfect – but its talents are rather different from its competitors'. The digital tuner produces vibrant, colourful images and extracts more detail from dark scenes than any other rival. It handles contrasts confidently, and establishes credible depth of field. But unlike its most accomplished adversaries, the Spheros suffers a metaphorical panic attack when it comes to tracking motion or delivering sharp edges. And while we're fussing, why does it take so long to change the channel?

Bags of detail from the Loewe

DVD performance is correspondingly mixed: 720p images are coloured naturally, skintones and textures being especially appealing. The Loewe also unearths heroic amounts of detail from its strong, depthless blacks.

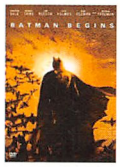
Sound – often a Loewe strength – is a cut above the competition, with a wide presentation that remains composed even with low-frequency bombast.

The performance flaws, though, are still evident with DVDs, if to a lesser degree: motion-tracking is still less than rock-solid, and picture noise can intrude.

The Loewe's problem is that it's not the best-performing screen here. Even allowing for the lovely build, covetable finish and all-round sexiness, we can't recommend it – it's just too expensive.

Test it with

Batman Begins



The dark knight returns, darker than ever (and he was pretty darn dark before!) in both mood and lighting. Only the Loewe can make meaningful sense of Chapter 13's depthless Batcave scenes, bring coherence and detail where other screens look like they've been switched off. Later episodes in the smoky, lawless Gotham streets are detailed just as lovingly, though the Spheros R37 is prone to flaring with complex images, which bodes badly for the rare bright-light scenes.

Panasonic TH37PX60

★★★★★ £1850

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION SUPERTEST WINNER

How does it look?
Of all these screens, the Panasonic delivers the best digital TV pictures – they're crisp, clean and colourful. And the story's the same with HDMI DVD images – no competitor, other than from the same family, can live with 'PX60's fidelity

What does it offer?
A nap hand: all the switching a reasonable customer might demand, including twin HDMI inputs. The remote's nice, too, and set-up is easy, even if the menus looks a bit old-fashioned

Will it suit your room?
There's nothing wrong with the Panasonic's appearance – it's clean and tidy – but run your fingers over the surround and it feels thin, hard and – well – cheap. That impression lasts until the moment you see the pictures, and then is forgotten

Is it built to last?
We've no reason to think not... despite the rather low-rent plastics, the TH37PX60 is firmly screwed together and seems as set for the long haul as any other Panasonic product

"A fancy spec is all well and good, but this set demonstrates that it ain't how many pixels you've got, it's what you do with 'em"

IN JANUARY OF this year, when we last got a group of 37in flatscreens together, this Panasonic's predecessor was the TV with the lowest resolution (1024 x 720) and the only plasma among a gang of LCD designs. Despite (or perhaps thanks to) these quirks, the TH37PV500 ran out a pretty comfortable winner.

Fast-forward to now, and the 'PV60's one of only two plasmas in a gang of LCDs – and the other's a Panasonic, too. It's the TV with the lowest (1024 x 720) resolution (along with the other Panasonic) and, cutting straight to the chase, it's the best-value screen on test.

"Smooth, lustrous and detailed and with rock-solid motion-tracking"

Directly out of the box, we found the TH37PX60 a bit of a disappointment in this company. Build quality is easily up to par, but the bezel doesn't feel that great, lacking some class. Once it's plugged in and set up (a doddle, thanks to some comprehensive menus and a logical remote), though, objections regarding the perceived value evaporate.

FOR
Great TV reception; DVD pictures (digital or analogue) are deeply satisfying

AGAINST
Slightly prosaic finish; doesn't quite have the covetability of previous Panas

VERDICT
Ignore the LCD TV pretenders at this screen size: Panasonic has demonstrated (for the umpteenth time) that plasma's where it's at right now

Digital TV reception is smooth and detailed. Edges are well defined, as is depth of field, and colours are neutral and natural. The TH37PX60 even summons some insight into murky TV pictures, and keeps picture noise to a bare minimum even in the most trying circumstances. Contrast is good, skintones are convincing – the Panasonic delivers the best TV reception in the test.

Incomparably good performance

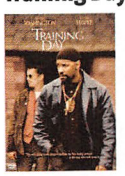
Switch to DVDs and the Panasonic just charges on: 720p HDMI pictures are admirable, being smooth, lustrous, detailed and with rock-solid motion tracking. Edges are defined rigorously, depth of field is convincing, contrasts are handled without fuss. Skintones and textures are effortlessly lifelike.

Panasonic has defiantly gone its own way where flatscreens are concerned. Sure, the company knocks out LCD displays, but they're smaller than this – where big screens are concerned, Panasonic puts its faith in plasma technology, and is handsomely rewarded.

An attention-grabbing spec is all well and good, but Panasonic demonstrates that it ain't how many pixels you've got, it's what you do with 'em.

Test it with

Training Day

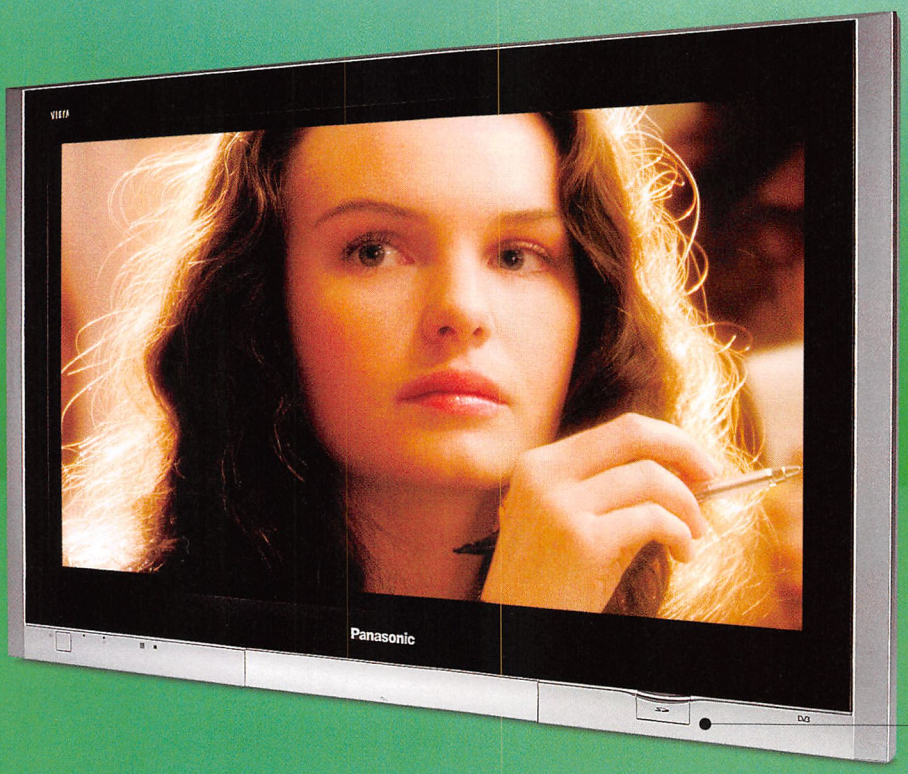


This movie has a little of everything needed to show off the Panasonic's talents, and some glaring contrasts really allow the 'PX60 to strut its stuff. The very first scene, as the sun rises on Ethan Hawke and Denzel Washington's first day working together, exposes any television screen that can't knit contrast, movement and colour together effectively. The Panasonic aces it, naturally. Other more frantic scenes show the Pana's stability under pressure – assured all round, then.

Panasonic TH37PX600

★★★★★ £2150

Will it suit your room?
Glossier and more substantial than its cheaper sibling, this is a much more realistic decorative proposition. Only the Loewe and LG look more impressive sitting in your lounge



How does it sound?
The built-in speakers are hidden away very effectively and produce a wider, chunkier and better-defined sound that the cheaper Pana – in fact, this is the biggest difference between them

How does it look?
The picture is just as good as its brother's – the best in this test, basically – despite the low resolution. But it doesn't deliver more for the money

What does it offer?
As well as twin tuners and two HDMI sockets, the Panasonic uniquely boasts an SD-card slot, which allows you to easily display digital photos and even record direct from the TV

"The TH37PX600 looks more upmarket than the 'PX60 when hoisted from its packaging: the bezel and chassis are smooth and shiny"

WE DON'T OFTEN include two screens by the same manufacturer in the same *Supertest*. In this instance, though, we've made an exception. For a start, we're completely intrigued by the idea of a screen that, as far as we can tell, is all-but-identical to the 'PX60 also reviewed here (in specification, at least), but sells for more money.

At least the TH37PX600 looks a bit more upmarket than the 'PX60 when it's hoisted from its packaging. The bezel and chassis here are smooth, shiny and substantial, lending the Panasonic a low-grade impression of cash and flash – we're not in ultra-sleek Loewe territory, you understand, but the TH37PX600 looks and feels a cut above the rest of the screens here. We include its stablemate in that.

"Along with its stablemate, this Panasonic satisfies like no other screen in the test"

FOR
Good looks; fine picture performance from all sources; superior sound

AGAINST
Made to look expensive by a close relative

VERDICT
Despite the nicer finish and better sound, we wouldn't pay the premium over the 'PX60 – if you're prepared to, this screen will delight

In terms of ergonomics and ease of set-up, we could simply refer you to the 'PX60 review – but we prefer to reiterate. The TH37PX600 delivers composed, realistic and endlessly watchable digital TV images that are alive with detail. Even low-lit scenes remain legible, and picture noise is repressed effectively.

Performance matches its sibling's

Watch a DVD through the analogue component or digital HDMI inputs and the similarities to the 'PX60's performance are just as pronounced. Smooth, deep, detailed images are blessed with lifelike, vibrant colours and excellent motion-handling. Dark-scene fidelity is excellent, as is edge definition; high-contrast scenes, even glaring whites, are gripped fanatically. Along with its stablemate, this Panasonic satisfies like no other screen in the test.

And yet... what are the advantages of this 'PX600 over the cheaper 'PX60? Well, it's undeniably a better-looking screen where the aesthetic is concerned, and its provision of a record and playback SD-card slot is great if you own a suitably equipped camera, camcorder or portable player. The speaker array is also upgraded, and creates a wider, better-focused sound than the merely-adequate 'PX60.

This is a superb television, but its little brother is even better value. You decide whether to pay the premium.

Test it with

Howl's Moving Castle

Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki is the master of the mystifying, dreamlike animation – and this film, his first he didn't write himself, looks truly stunning. The Panasonic makes the most of the glorious colours, sinuous movement and intricate detail, while the capable speaker array copes manfully with the multilayered soundtrack. Try Chapter 18's pitched battle to show the Panasonic at the top of its game. You won't be disappointed in any respect.

Sharp LC37P70

★★☆☆☆ £1600

Analogue or digital?
The Sharp has both, and is theoretically designed to maximise off-air broadcast quality. A shame to report, then, that its TV reception is noisy and ill-sorted. HDMI pictures are much better, but not true HD

How does it look?
It looks much less successful than its 32in sibling – TV images are ragged and prone to noise, while DVD pictures (though fine compared to the telly) don't have sufficient resolution to make the most of the digital input

Will it suit your room?
By keeping the speakers below the screen, Sharp has maintained a relatively tidy profile, and the screen looks and feels the money. The titanium finish is especially stylish

Can you boost it?
You'd better. Every aspect of the picture is overdriven when the Sharp is taken from its packaging, so unless you want to squint at the screen you'll invest a few minutes in getting a more natural look

"The Sharp, despite its digital HDMI input and 'HD compatible' badging, can't actually display true High Definition content at all"

SHARP HAS MADE a rod for its own back here. In a market virtually bereft of unique selling points, Sharp has tuned some of its LCD screens to deliver as good a PAL-standard TV picture as possible. The LC37P70's resolution of 960 x 540 means this country's 576-line TV signal needs little adulteration – but it also means that the Sharp, despite its HDMI input and 'HD compatible' badging, can't display true High Def content. When we *First Test*-ed its 32in LC32P50 forebear last year, which boasted similar resolution, we lauded its broadcast TV picture as the best an LCD screen has produced. That was then, though, and this is now – the LC37P70 is a very different proposition.

"In high-contrast scenes, images can shimmer like the road on a very hot day"

By any reasonable measure, the Sharp's TV pictures aren't up to par. There's all-but-constant picture noise, edges are restless and ragged and, in high-contrast scenes, images can shimmer like the road on a very hot day. The bespoke resolution that served the 32in model so well is a definite damp squib here, even if the LC37P70 offers vivid colours and tracks motion well.

When it comes to HDMI-delivered DVD pictures, the Sharp hauls itself back onto the pace. The woeful picture noise is far better controlled (at least until the going gets complex), details are made apparent, and the already-impressive colour palette gains greater poise and solidity. Fine depth of field adds credibility to images, as does proficient motion-tracking and assured contrast.

Too many flaws to be recommended

The LC37P70 is an easy-to-use LCD TV that's well made and looks good, and it delivers HDMI-derived pictures with poise and authority. But despite this, the Sharp is nothing more than a distant also-ran in this test. It doesn't offer as convincing a TV picture as its assembled rivals, in spite of a resolution tailor-made to make the best of TV broadcasts, and its otherwise-acceptable HDMI performance is hamstrung by the absence of true HD ability.

Which is why we'd have to rate the LC37P70 as a disappointment. Other sets, many of them cheaper, are better.

FOR
Tidy looks; decent digital DVD pictures

AGAINST
TV pictures are poor; HD-compatible ain't HD-Ready

VERDICT
As disappointing as its smaller sibling is gratifying, the Sharp is under-spec'd and also over-priced

Test it with

Goodnight and Good Luck

Just because George Clooney is depicted in America as a bleeding-heart liberal/pinko agitator, that's no reason to heap praise on him unnecessarily. Fortunately, *Goodnight and Good Luck* is a thought-provoking, well-acted and beautifully photographed (in black & white) meditation on the dumbing-down of American media that's been going on since the McCarthy era where this film is set. The Sharp is never comfortable with the unpredictable movement, preferring to demonstrate its commendable contrast.

i-deck® compact

a new dimension in sound

Experience a sound sensation anywhere you want thanks to new i-deck compact – the next generation iPod speaker system.
Hot on the heels of the original award-winning i-deck, the i-deck compact combines space-saving, stylish design and portability with truly superb audio performance. Aptly named, its amplifier, dock and speakers are integrated into one compact unit that's designed to take up minimal space. And with its video outputs to hook up to a TV or screen you can max the potential of your iPod video downloads to full effect. Sleek good looks, great technology, total iPod navigation from the infra red remote control and integral grab handle for portability make i-deck compact the perfect partner for all iPod models. Simply dock and play.

Available in black or white at www.i-deck.com

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Toshiba 37WL66

★★★☆☆ £1550

How does it look?
We've come to expect better from Toshiba. Its analogue-only TV picture is host to any number of flaws, edge-definition problems and flaring chief among them. HDMI images are far superior, though the flaring sticks around

Will it suit your room?
Considering its screens are always keenly priced, the Tosh's cabinet's proportions are neat and it feels sturdy. As one of the lighter designs here, it should be less traumatic to wall-mount, too

What does it offer?
The lot: two HDMI inputs, component and Scart too, on top of its elegant looks. If you're set-top-box-less, another £100-ish buys you the 37WLT66 with integrated Freeview

Can you boost it?
There's lots of flexibility in the Toshiba's set-up menus, and they're quick and easy to use thanks to the usual excellent Tosh remote. Make the brightness the first thing you tone down, unless you've cataracts you're trying to remedy

"Just like the Sharp, this 37in Toshiba screen doesn't have anything like the performance of its smaller, 32in brother"

JUST LIKE THE Sharp, this Toshiba screen is a bigger model from a range that's impressed us so far – May 2006's *First Test* of the 32WLT66 lauded its superb performance and affordable price.

Unlike the 32-incher we tested, though (which has a 'T' in its model number), this 37in is an analogue-only tuner. There's an analogue and digital tuner-equipped model costing £1650, if

"The picture's soft edges leave the Toshiba prey to colour-flaring instances"

you so desire. The popularity of digiboxes means this will be many people's choice.

And just like the Sharp, this Toshiba screen doesn't have anything like the performance of its smaller brother.

The 37WL66's menus, remote and ergonomics in general are exemplary, and build quality is well up to the prevalent standard (we're omitting the Loewe from that last equation, mind).

FOR
Decent build; easy to set up; agreeable HDMI pictures

AGAINST
Sub-standard TV pictures

VERDICT
Nothing like as complete as we've become used to from Toshiba, the 37WL66 is a 'glass-half-empty' kind of television

Once you've skipped through the set-up procedure, though, the flaws in the Toshiba's analogue TV picture are immediately obvious. Initially, the lack of discipline to edges draws your attention, but a longer look reveals other problems: the ragged edges beget sharp, grainy definition in complicated scenes, while movement is tracked uncertainly. The soft picture leaves the 37WL66 prey to colour-flaring during high-contrast moments. A subtle, well-judged colour palette is no real compensation.

DVD pictures eclipse broadcast TV

It's a different story where 720p pictures via HDMI are concerned. The Toshiba generates smooth, unbroken edges, splendid depth of field and digs deep into dark scenes for details. Movement is gripped with authority, allowing far greater poise and coherence to images, and textural information is delivered without dramas. Bright yellows or whites still provoke uncomfortable flaring, but that's the only real blemish.

As a screener of movies, the Toshiba is a great mid-market contender, but if you intend to use your new 37in screen as an everyday TV, the 37WL66 is found wanting. Pictures via cable or Sky might be superior to those from the Tosh's on-board tuner, but if there's a sow's ear somewhere in your signal path, you'll never get that silk purse you're expecting.

Test it with

The Weatherman

Despite earning six figures for next-to-no work, the titular weatherman feels he's a failure. That's the premise for Nicholas Cage (the finest horse-faced actor of his generation) to run through his repertoire of lugubrious faces. The beautiful picture transfer allows this talented Toshiba television to demonstrate its mastery of barely-there colour differentials, though the film demands depth to blacks that the 37WL66 just can't muster. Overall, it's a mixed performance, then.

37IN FLATSCREEN TVS

Viewsonic N3760W

★★★☆☆ £1000

What does it offer?
The compulsory HD-ready resolution, plus plenty of switching and workable ergonomics make worthwhile headlines. Analogue tuner might turn some off

How does it look?
The analogue tuner is less-than-impressive, serving up a soft, ill-defined picture. HDMI images don't please like they should, though analogue DVD pictures are nicely-balanced

How does it sound?
Quite well-separated, considering the location of the speakers, but the sonic signature is always thin and undernourished. It follows that watching and listening to TV is more of a chore than a relaxation

Is it built to last?
Bearing in mind the price (as we surely must), the Viewsonic is well up to the standards of its competitors – it might not be the best-looking screen here, but it should last as long as any other

"Sadly, the most compelling reason to consider this Viewsonic television has been undermined by its competitors' price cuts"

WHEN WE FIRST looked at this tidy, blandly attractive screen in January of this year, it cost £1250 – which made it the cheapest telly in that test by over £500. The N3760W lit all the 'bargain' buttons and, as a consequence, scored a healthy four stars.

These days the TV is a mere £1000, so should be even better value, right? Well, no. In seven months, the Viewsonic has just had a price-cut, while rivals have

"The Viewsonic TV gives a far better account of itself when playing back DVDs"

brought out next-gen screens that offer more, and at less of a premium.

However, this is still a likeable TV: it's got great flexibility in set-up terms, and getting the best from it is easy thanks to an intuitive remote and correspondingly sensible menus. The analogue-only tuner is a bit 'thud and blunder', delivering unyieldingly soft, smeary images that lack some low-light detail, though the colour balance is agreeable and static edges are drawn well.

FOR
Least expensive here; neat design; reasonable-quality DVD pictures

AGAINST
Poor TV reception; doesn't undercut the opposition like it did

VERDICT
This is still the bargain option, but not one we'd recommend as once we might have

The Viewsonic gives a far better account of itself when playing back DVDs. Its analogue-derived pictures are nothing like as soft-boiled as the TV reception, tracking motion far more successfully and writing stronger edges.

The picture noise that accompanies the TV pictures is more effectively subdued and even the sound gains some heft and definition. There's still a shortage of dark-scene detail, though, and some flaring during high-contrast or bright scenes.

Digital pictures aren't that different

The Viewsonic has the least dramatic improvement when you switch to HDMI: there are noticeable gains in detail and skintone, but digital noise still sticks its oar in, and dusty or smoky scenes need little excuse to flare promiscuously.

Sadly, the compelling reason to buy the N3760W has been undermined by its competitors. Yes, it's still fair value for money, and if you have a Freeview tuner box (or similar), you can bypass the set's miserable TV reception, while still benefiting from its decent DVD performance.

However, price itself is no longer good enough to make the Viewsonic attractive. In fact, if you only want to spend £1000 on a TV, perhaps consider a 32in model, or save a little longer. You won't regret it.

Test it with

Two for the Money

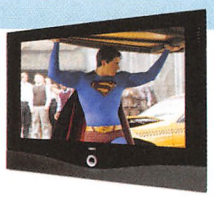
Matthew McConaughey, René Russo and Al Pacino look all soft-focus and air-brushed in this ill-sorted, contrived mentor/protégé/marital aggro clunker – and the picture suits the Viewsonic totally. Smooth and soft is its MO, after all. Try Chapter 14 for its Vaseline-lensed flattering of Pacino's extraordinarily overacted endorsement of McConaughey: softness becomes slushiness quickly, but Mad Al's fruity, hammy performance cuts through the sludge.

Somehow Coventry didn't seem such a bad place after all

Superb record players from around £130

Distributed in the UK by: Henley Designs Ltd, 01235 511166
www.henleydesigns.co.uk, e-mail - info@henleydesigns.co.uk

FACTS AND FIGURES

			SCREEN SIZE (in)	SCREEN RATIO	RESOLUTION	HD-READY	ANALOGUE TUNER	DIGITAL TUNER	INPUTS: HDMI	INPUTS: COMPONENT	INPUTS: SCART	INPUTS: S-VIDEO	INPUTS: COMPOSITE	INPUTS: PHONO IN	SPEAKERS	DIMENSIONS (cm)	WEIGHT (kg)
JVC LT-37DR7 £1450 www. jvc.co.uk 0208 4503282		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE TV reception is among the best, but somehow it doesn't hang together. Digital pictures are far more successful	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	92x60x13	20
		★★★ SOUND Reasonable detail and separation; can but hint at low-end stuff															
		★★★★ FEATURES High-Def ready, decent set-up procedure, two tuners – all good, then															
LG 37LC2D £1400 www.lge.com 01753 500400		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE TV reception isn't perfect, but watchable nonetheless. Analogue or digitally transferred DVD pictures are gratifying	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	94x66x13	27
		★★★ SOUND Reasonable separation and easy to follow, but can be hard and is always lightweight															
		★★★★ FEATURES Par for the course: HD-ready, plenty of switching and coherent menus															
LOEWE SPHEROS R37 £3000 www.loewe-uk.com 0800 0276465		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE The best blacks and low-light detail here, but noisy and coarse compared to the leaders	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	99x72x9	38
		★★★★★ SOUND Substantial soundstage, distinct and poised at all times. Believable weight to low frequencies, too															
		★★★★ FEATURES Sufficient sockets, endless customisation possibilities and endless pride of ownership															
PANASONIC TH37PX60 £1850 www.panasonic.co.uk 08705 357357		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE TV reception is composed and cohesive, and HD/DVD pictures leave all but its sibling's standing	37	16:9	1024x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	92x65x10	26
		★★★ SOUND Adequate for a flatscreen – that's to say, a bit thin and diaphanous. Promise us you'll add a proper sound system															
		★★★★★ FEATURES The low resolution makes no odds, and a second HDMI input is essential to make the most of both HD and DVD															
PANASONIC TH37PX600 £2150 www.panasonic.co.uk 08705 357357		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE Assured image-making and confident presentation – just like its little brother	37	16:9	1024x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	98x63x14	29
		★★★★ SOUND Wide and reasonably deep presentation, second only to the Loewe in this instance															
		★★★★★ FEATURES Ignore the resolution and look at the pictures; a second HDMI input will come in handy															
SHARP LC37P70 £1600 www.sharp.co.uk 0800 1385051		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE Adequate HDMI pictures can't compensate for the lacklustre off-air performance	37	16:9	960x540	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	93x71x13	23
		★★★ SOUND Possibly the most competitive aspect of the Sharp's performance – an indictment in its own way															
		★★★ FEATURES If the TV reception was better, the lack of true HD resolution would be less of an issue. It isn't, so it is															
TOSHIBA 37WL66 £1550 www.toshiba.co.uk 08704 424424		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE DVD pictures impress, by this Tosh is atypically tentative when producing TV images	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	92x64x12	21
		★★★ SOUND Slightly hard, fractionally lean, definitely lightweight – par for the course, then															
		★★★★★ FEATURES Great menus, good remote and sockets to spare – includes two HDMI inputs															
VIEWSONIC N3760W £1000 www.viewsoniceurope.com/uk 01293 643900		★★★★★ ★★★★★ PICTURE TV reception is on the ragged side, but some credibility is regained with DVD pictures	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	96x73x12	25
		★★ SOUND In a test awash with underwhelming sound performance, this is decisively the weediest															
		★★★★ FEATURES HD-ready, all the switches, decent ergonomics – not the expected resumé of your typical budget special															

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
SUPERTEST WINNER

Panasonic TH37PX60

★★★★★

£1850

TEST RESULT Two **Panasonic** plasmas take on the massed ranks of the LCD brethren – and clearly come out on top

BROADLY SPEAKING, THE result is as follows: we all win. Flatscreen prices are in gratifyingly steep decline and quality is, simultaneously, on the up. Even better, competition is so fierce that no-one with five minutes to do some research need pay the prices we're quoting.

If you do only have five minutes, we can at least narrow your choice down. For instance, there's very little to recommend the Sharp: its smaller PAL-specific screens have impressed us in the past, but this model doesn't compete. And the Viewsonic, previously a budget-orientated bargain, has let more accomplished screens close the price gap – you'll require a hefty discount before it's a good buy.

"The TH37PX600 is the aesthete's choice, but sensible folk will take the superb TH37PX60 and pocket a chunk of change"

Pair of Panasonics take plaudits

You won't find hefty discounts on the Loewe, we fear, and that means it's to be scrubbed off your shortlist unless you value svelte good looks over everything else. Probably best to disregard the Toshiba, too – we have to say it's been a while since Toshiba delivered such a pedestrian product to our offices.

Investigate the JVC and LG sets fully. They're worth a look as they're capable, well-made TVs at aggressive prices.

However, the best performance comes at a slightly higher price. Panasonic's plasmas have swept all before them in the past, and these latest models continue a proud tradition. The Pana TH37PX600 would be the aesthete's choice, but sensible, value-for-money folk will take the superb TH37PX60 and pocket a handy chunk of change.

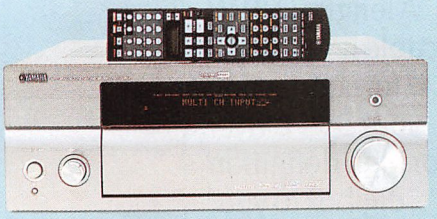
BUYER'S GUIDE £

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

NOW ADD THESE

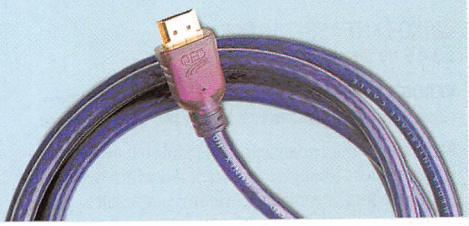
DVD PLAYER
PIONEER DV-989AVi
★★★★★
£850
February 2006
King of the sub-£1000 DVD player pile because of its unparallel picture quality. Will make the Panasonic really perform.

MULTICHANNEL AMPLIFIER
YAMAHA RX-V2600
★★★★★
£900
June 2006
Competent with music, but really very good with movies. The perfect receiver to bring life to your film collection and TV.



MULTICHANNEL SPEAKERS
B&W MT-30
★★★★★
£1575
September 2005
Small and beautifully formed, the B&Ws will revel being on the front of the Yamaha. The PV1 subwoofer is a star in its own right.

VIDEO CABLE
QED QUNEX HDMI-P
★★★★★
£58
September 2005
The Panasonic displays great pictures – make sure they reach it in tip-top condition with this superb video cable.

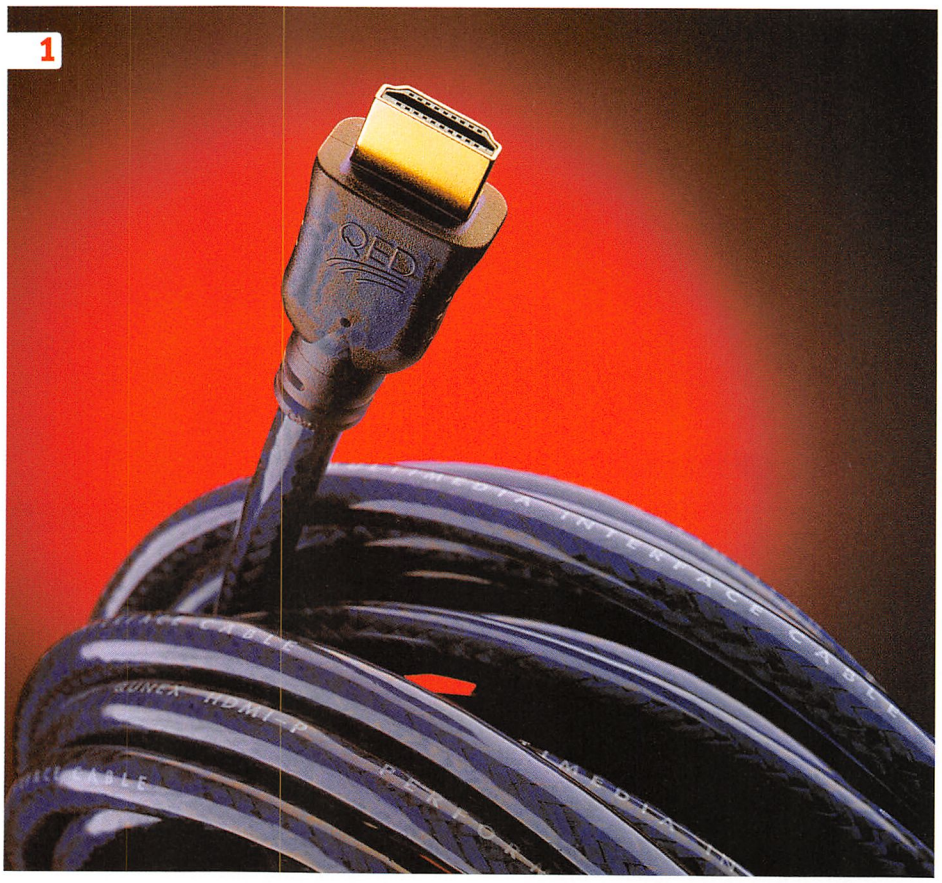


SPEAKER CABLE
QED SILVER ANNIVERSARY XT
★★★★★
£5.50/m
Awards 2005
The B&Ws demand bare-wired speaker cable – fortunately, this sounds superb as well as being tidy. Budget for 20m.

TOTAL £5343

Red hot & high def

A lengthy HDMI cable is essential for connecting your DVD player or high definition digibox to your projector or flatscreen TV. We test the best wires around



1 QED QUNEX HDMI-P (7m)
£85 ★★★★★

VERDICT Stunning value, offering a cracking picture. It's suitable for use with the best of today's budget displays

Not for the first time, QED wades in with a remarkably priced product that not only upsets, but also rear-ends and writes off the apple cart. This bright purple wire delivers fine depth of field, great detail, and it handles movement with skill. Luscious palettes, such as those found in *Memoirs of a Geisha*, look brilliant, while colours are realistic. That said, this cable can be bettered – the Chord, on the right, beats it – but as the only sub-£100 wire here, it holds its own with impressive ease.

2 IXOS XHT 458-750 (7.5m)
£145 ★★★☆☆

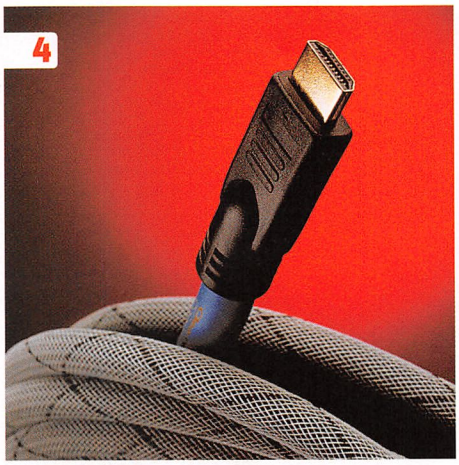
VERDICT We love the shorter-lengthed version of this cable, but this doesn't match its wee bro's performance

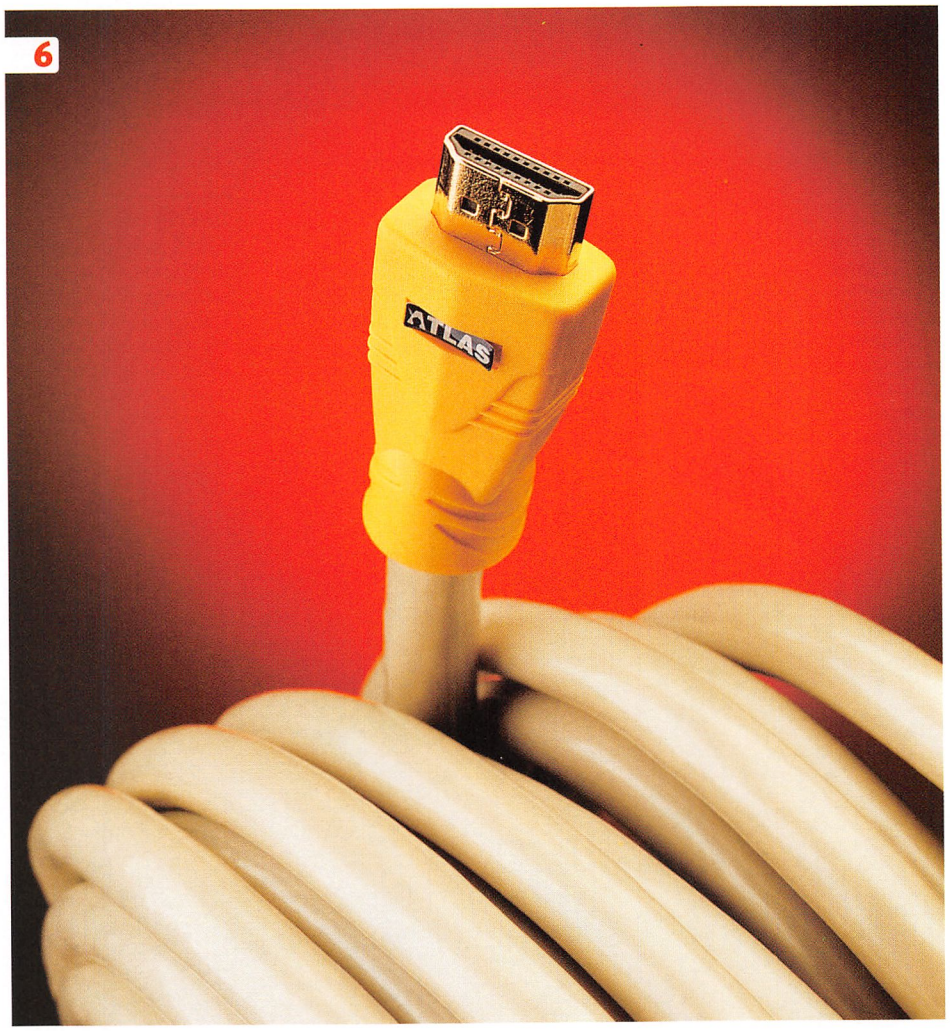
We're fans of the 1m version of this cable – however, this length lacks its sibling's excellent ability with movement and sharpness, meaning the overall visual result is decent, but by no means a class-leading performance.

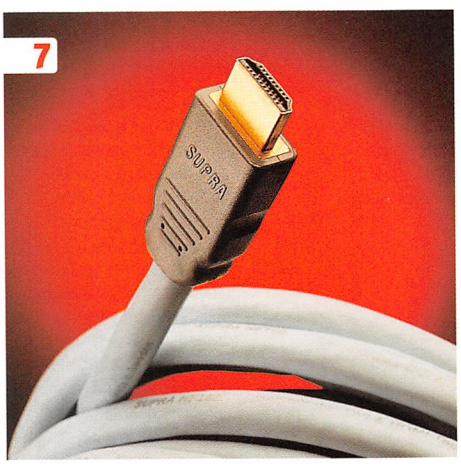
3 ECOSSE PICTURE PERFECT HDMI (10m)
£209 ★★★★☆

VERDICT Long and extremely capable digital video lead that offers excellent performance with screen movement

On a par length-wise with the Atlas cable tested, this long lead also offers almost identical performance to its fellow Scottish product. In particular, it delivers an extremely solid presentation of movement.







4 CLEARER AUDIO COPPER-LINE HDMI (8m) £117 ★★★☆☆

VERDICT A solid performance, but the Clearer Audio can't quite match the value of QED's cracking cable

We had a similar experience with Clearer Audio's entrant as we did with the Ixos cable on test: we loved the 1m version of the Copper-line, awarding it five stars. However, this 8m length falls short of our ideal: lacking the depth of field and rapid-action smoothness of the best, the Copper-line wire merits an average verdict. The company states this cable loses 1080p compatibility when it crosses the 5m threshhold, but like all the cables on test, it worked in our system.

5 CHORD COMPANY SILVER PLUS HDMI (8m) £160 ★★★★★

VERDICT Plain looks fade into the background, but the brilliant picture leaps lusciously into the foreground

Never judge an HDMI cable by its cover – as nobody in particular said – otherwise, you could miss out on Chord Company's stunning lead. This plain-looking item might not be cheap – however, owners of higher-end slimscreens and projectors should consider the extra spend. Why? Well, you benefit from awesome contrast, masses of sought-after detail, stunning depth of field, plus class-leading ability with rapid movement. If you can afford it, buy the Silver Plus.

6 ATLAS HDMI (10m) £200 ★★★★☆

VERDICT A major rival to Ecosse's 10m cable, and very good performance for such an extremely long run of wire

This vast length is ideal for extended runs in very large rooms – we're thinking of projector set-ups, especially – and it's also a pretty fine performer. It's great with movement, isn't short of detail, and offers rich colours. In fact, we found virtually nothing to separate it from its equally talented Ecosse rival. Use it or the Ecosse if you need a 10m cable, but consider the superior Chord Company HDMI tested above if you think you can get away with a shorter run.

7 SUPRA HDMI (8m) £120 ★★★★☆

VERDICT Not just a pretty (powder blue) face, this Supra delivers impressive performance over eight metres

To some, giving too much consideration to the looks of cables, let alone the performance, can seem somewhat tweaky. But we quite like this Supra's blue jacket – so there! We also like its crisp and detailed picture, while its excellent contrast delivers a supremely interesting picture. All that's holding it back from earning a full five stars is the performance of the cheaper QED cable. The Supra doesn't even claim 1080p ability, but (on our kit) it does deliver.

8 OEHLBACH REAL MATRIX HDMI (7.5m) £185 ★★☆☆☆

VERDICT Feels like a quality wire in the hand, but fails to deliver the desired leading picture performance

A new name on cable street, Oehlbach is making moves on the UK flatscreen and projector cabling markets. This well-built offering delivers good video specification, but its underwhelming contrast levels, matched with average quality of detail retrieval, make for a less-than-enthralling viewing experience. On the upside, you get decent ability with movement. However, that positive isn't sufficient to provide the company with a more flattering debut. Shame!

QUICK CHECK

All turntables are sensitive to where you locate them, whether they have suspension or not

You must get the arm adjustments spot on, otherwise the sound quality will start to suffer

A cartridge is very delicate, so don't damage it. It'll wear out, too, so replace it on a regular basis

Instant Expert

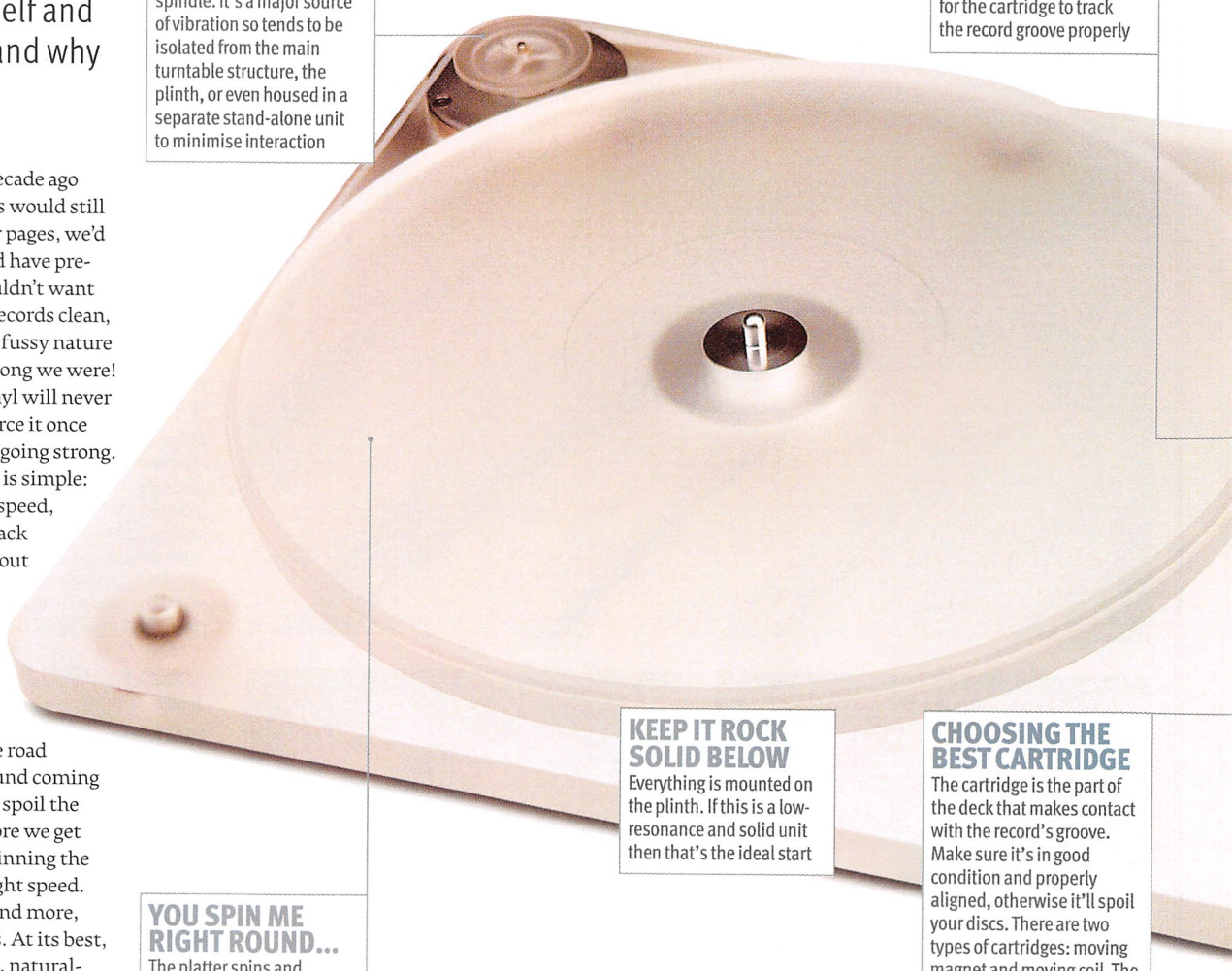
TURNTABLES NO. 14

KNOW HOW Vinyl is the format that just refuses to lay down and die: listen for yourself and you'll understand why

IF YOU HAD asked us a decade ago whether record players would still appear regularly in our pages, we'd have said no. We would have predicted that people wouldn't want the hassle of keeping records clean, or putting up with the fussy nature of the players. How wrong we were! While it's true that vinyl will never be the mass-market force it once was, the format is still going strong.

A record player's job is simple: spin a disc at the right speed, and let the cartridge track the record groove without outside disturbance. It's simple to explain, but almost impossible to get right. The vibrations caused by someone walking into the room, traffic on the road outside, or even the sound coming out of the speakers can spoil the results. And that's before we get to the difficulties in spinning the record at exactly the right speed.

Yet, despite all this and more, records sound fabulous. At its best, vinyl has the dynamics, naturalness and timing that even the finest digital players struggle to match. That's why those black vinyl discs just keep going and going...



SAY GOODBYE TO BAD VIBES

The motor drives the platter – the bit that the record sits on – with a rubber belt or directly through the centre spindle. It's a major source of vibration so tends to be isolated from the main turntable structure, the plinth, or even housed in a separate stand-alone unit to minimise interaction

IS THE GROOVE ARM HARDER?

The tonearm (or 'arm) is the part that holds the cartridge. It has to be rigid and have minimal play in its bearing for the cartridge to track the record groove properly

KEEP IT ROCK SOLID BELOW

Everything is mounted on the plinth. If this is a low-resonance and solid unit then that's the ideal start

CHOOSING THE BEST CARTRIDGE

The cartridge is the part of the deck that makes contact with the record's groove. Make sure it's in good condition and properly aligned, otherwise it'll spoil your discs. There are two types of cartridges: moving magnet and moving coil. The latter usually cost more and have a lower output, though they tend to sound cleaner and more detailed overall than moving magnet designs

YOU SPIN ME RIGHT ROUND...

The platter spins and supports the record, aiming to give the cartridge the easiest ride. An inert structure is a good thing

BEST BUYS

There's a turntable to suit everyone, whether you're a budding DJ, a style guru, or looking for something sensible to keep your vinyl collection alive. Here are five of our favourites – for the full selection, check out the *Buyer's Guide* starting on p91 of this issue

BEST FOR VALUE

PRO-JECT DEBUT III PHONO SB

★★★★★

£180

First-time buyers are laughing here: this latest iteration of a classic deck includes a talented built-in phono amp – so it plugs into any stereo amp – plus a switch to change speed from 33 to 45rpm (many decks are manual). And there's a fine cartridge thrown in... magic!

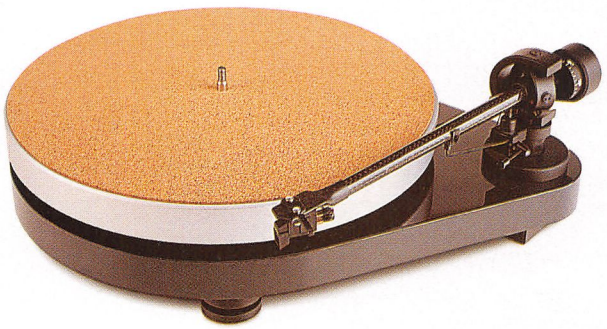
BEST FOR BUDGET UPGRADERS

PRO-JECT RPM5

★★★★★

£400

We only tested this model a couple of months ago, but it has already achieved near-legendary status, such is its blend of great value, stunning sound and cool looks. In action, the RPM5 excels: bass is deep and defined, mid-range open and involving, while treble has clarity and attack. Pro-ject has done it again.



BEST FOR DJs

TECHNICS SL1210 MK5G

★★★☆☆

£550

In clubland this deck has a bigger reputation than DJs Jules, Slim, and Tong put together. It loses stars due to our strict sound-per-pound reviewing system – you're paying a premium for tank-like build, plus DJ'ing extras – but if you want to raise the roof, rely on a Technics SL1210 (or two).

BEST FOR STYLE

WILSON BENESCH FULL CIRCLE

★★★★★

£2000

While the Clearaudio deck below bests the Wilson Benesch for 'bling', not all of us want our houses to look like Beckingham Palace. And this Wilson Benesch doesn't only ooze understated style, it also sounds awesome, offering an utterly composed yet insightful performance. The Full Circle cuts no corners.

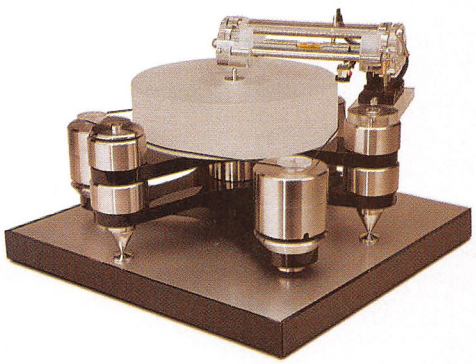
BEST FOR MILLIONAIRES

CLEARAUDIO MASTER REFERENCE

★★★★★

£14,150

You're probably familiar with Clearaudio's Award-winning Emotion deck (opposite). Well, this is the Daddy! Fabricated using the same distinctive combination of acrylic and metal, the Master Reference has such a supreme range of abilities that it's safe to say it easily justifies the massive outlay. As long you can find space to put the thing...



KEEPING THE PRESSURE ON

Cartridges have to track at a precise weight to deliver the optimum performance. The counterweight sets the downforce. It's important to get this right, because if it's set too high the sound will be dull and thick in the bass. If it's too low then the sound will become edgy, thin and possibly even distorted

10 ways to get more from DVD & hard-disk recorders »

You've binned the old VCR and fancy a shiny new digital video recorder – here's how to get picture-perfect recordings every time

01 Maximise the TV signal

The ancient hi-fi axiom of 'rubbish in, rubbish out' is every bit as true with video as it is with audio. Your TV aerial is a vital link in the picture-quality chain: a weak signal can hobble even the best DVD recorders. So, unless you never intend to record off-air – which is unlikely – get a specialist to perform a health check on your TV aerial. Often, an inexpensive realignment can produce a much better signal, while fresh coaxial cable from aerial to outlet socket can also make a massive difference to the picture. Even a new aerial doesn't cost that much.

02 Use a Freeview tuner

If you're buying new and don't plan to use a subscription-based TV supplier, the best performance comes from a DVD recorder with a decent Freeview TV tuner built-in. Aside from securing you against the analogue TV switch-off (not far away now, for some parts of the UK), this will deliver the best picture, as it preserves the TV broadcast in the digital domain for as long as possible, and removes variability in quality caused by cabling and digital-to-analogue conversion. It also gives you access to interactive features and programme guides.

03 Cable & satellite signals

However, if you've already got a high-quality Freeview box, or use Sky or NTL/Telewest cable services, then there's an argument for saving a few quid and opting for a DVD recorder with an analogue TV tuner. These do tend to be cheaper, though the price gap between analogue and digital models isn't as wide as it was: £100 is typical. Remember that the signal path between your set-top box (whatever type it is) and your recorder needs to be as direct as possible – avoid routing pictures through other kit where possible, and use short cables.

04 RGB-Scart can be best

If you're buying a recorder to use with a set-top box, make sure it has an RGB-Scart input. Many DVD recorders don't (and we're not just talking about the cheap ones), but one will make a huge difference to image quality. If you don't have an RGB-Scart input, you might be limited to using a basic composite-video connection. If you do have the right sockets, buy a decent RGB-Scart cable.

05 Upgrade your cabling

For wall-mounted TV aerial outlet sockets, get a QED Qunex TTV aerial cable (£30 for 1.5m) to maximise signal quality. Keep your aerial cable away from mains cables, and avoid spooling or twisting cables: the spaghetti of cabling lurking behind many a TV isn't just unsightly, it hampers performance. Upgraded video cables are also essential: a £30 RGB-capable Scart cable is ideal for a cheaper recorder, while many recorders justify using superior component video connections, or even HDMI, if possible.

06 Look out for a multiformat recorder

The recent format war between a series of competing recordable discs has been a monumental pain in the posterior for all concerned. Happily, it looks as if DVD recorder manufacturers have put paid to the whole thing. You can now buy multiformat recorders able to record to at least four differing blank discs, from several manufacturers – and Panasonic's latest range, including the DMR-EZ25 (see our *First Test*, on p22) records to all five (DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, DVD-RAM). We would choose a multiformat recorder wherever possible.

Formats, hard disks, tuners? Buying a DVD recorder can be confusing if you haven't done your homework

07 Hard-disks make life easy

For the ultimate convenience, a recorder with a hard-disk drive (HDD) is a great buy, though it'll cost you more. First, it means you don't need to worry about having a blank disc: simply hit record with impunity, as your intended recording is almost certain to fit the space you have available (though see point 10). Hard-disks also allow some cool features, like pausing live TV – if the doorbell rings, you can pause your programme and come back to the same point in the broadcast a few minutes later. Keen home editors can also splice and dice recordings, too.

08 Keep the kids happy, too

If you want to use your DVD recorder as your main DVD player and for recording, then having a hard disk is especially worthwhile. It means you can play pre-recorded DVDs and record from the TV at the same time – a lifesaving feature for families, especially

» "For the ultimate in convenience, a DVD recorder with a hard disk is essential"

those of you with youngsters addicted to the latest *Tractor Tom* DVD. They can get their fix, while the HDD's busy capturing your fave shows to watch when they've finally gone to bed (if you've the energy).

09 Max your recording quality

Unless you absolutely can't avoid using a lower-quality mode, stick to better-quality, shorter-duration modes when setting your timed recordings. Image quality can drop off significantly in long-play modes, and you'll see the difference clearly on a good TV, especially a flatscreen. Dual-layer DVD discs can be worth using (they cost more, but several new recorders can use them). They offer nearly twice the storage capacity of standard DVD discs, giving you much more recording time or allowing better quality. Hard-disks can be even more accommodating: with 250GB of space, you can record around 40 hours at best-quality.

10 Don't fill up your hard disk – and keep it cool

If you have a hard-disk recorder, delete older content from it regularly to avoid crashes. We've found that most hard-disk recorders suffer from stability problems when you approach their maximum capacity. If you only have 20 percent of storage space or less on your disk, give it a spring clean, or archive some content to DVD. Also, consider where you position your kit, as anything with a hard-disk mustn't get too hot. Keep your beloved recorder away from sources of heat, such as AV amps, and make sure it's well ventilated.

What it's really and Telewest

THERE'S BEEN A battle to get enough high-def boxes into houses; installations have been postponed; waiting lists are long; no single service offers every HD channel; some HD televisions have been mis-sold... These are the negative headlines screaming from every daily paper, with the obvious exception of Mr Murdoch's portfolio, which has been rampantly plugging its Sky sibling.

What there's been precious little of – and here's where we come in – is thorough feedback about what high-definition TV is really like to live with. How long

TELEWEST HD WHAT IT COSTS

1 Essentials

The TVDrive box comes free; rental is £15/month for Starter subscribers, £10 for Essential and Supreme users. Starter is £5.50/month plus £5 for Teleport TV (essential for HD). New users get free install; others pay £75

From £25.50/month

2 Programmes

Telewest's HD line-up – which does not include any of Sky's own HD channels – comes via its Teleport TV service. Teleport is free with the Essential (£11.50/month) and Supreme (£17.50/month) services

From £0 extra

3 Extras

Sky Sports (four channels) costs £22/month and Sky Movies (ten channels) costs £23/month, or you can buy both packages for £26.50. Sky Sports HD and Sky Movies HD are not available via Telewest

From £22/month

TOTAL £25.50-£65/month

like to live with Sky high-definition TV

does it take to install? Do you need anything else at home apart from an HD-ready TV or projector? What are the true costs every month, once you read the small print in the contract? And most importantly, does it really look as jaw-droppingly fantastic as promised?

Yes, is the simple answer to the last question, but we'll rave more about that later, along with covering all the other queries (and more), and rating the performance of the two main high-definition services.

So, are you ready to shop? The facts start here...

SKY HD WHAT IT COSTS

1 Essentials

The Sky HD box costs £299, plus £10/month. Install is currently free. There is an additional £10/month Sky+ fee unless you subscribe to at least two premium channels. The box must connect to a phoneline

From £299 + £10/m

2 Programmes

Sky offers a wide range of packages, starting from its £15 basic mix (plus £10 Sky+ fee), which includes Sky One HD and others. The flagship Sky World package, including the full channel line-up, is £42.50/month

From £35/month

3 Extras

Sky Box Office HD offers a selection of the most recent movie releases. Pay-per-view football and other sports events will be available in high definition later this year. Box office movies cost £3.75 each.

From £35/month

TOTAL £299 + £35-£52.50/m

Living with High-Def

Three testers with different set-ups and services answer all the key questions about high-definition TV in action

TW TELEWEST HD tester with LCD TV
S1 SKY HD tester with plasma TV
S2 SKY HD tester with projector

WHAT WAS THE INSTALL LIKE?

TW I already had Telewest installed, so it was simply a case of swapping out my old set-top box for the new TVDrive, which took no more than an hour. The engineer set the box to output HD at 1080i, and gave me a customer helpline number to call if I had any problems. It was all very simple and convenient.

S1 I've had Sky+ for years, which made the installation easier, because my existing satellite dish already had provision for two TV tuners, and so didn't need an upgrade.

> "You can also pause live TV, and the Telewest box allows you to record two programmes at the same time as watching a third"

The Sky engineer was punctual, courteous and efficient, and the whole job took less than 30 minutes. The new box is supplied with a 1m HDMI lead, but not an optical digital connector – essential for 5.1 audio into my home cinema system. Not a problem, because I already had a wire in place, but worth knowing.

S2 As above, really, except a much longer HDMI lead was needed for the projector!

HOW EASY IS IT TO USE?

TW Largely, great. Once you access the on-screen TV Guide, just press the red button on the remote and it takes you instantly to the HD programme guide. Highlight the programme you want to watch and press the OK button. You can also pause live TV, and the TVDrive allows you to record two programmes simultaneously while watching a third. Setting up recordings, either for an individual programme or an entire series, is a doddle. The box can sound a bit noisy at times, and occasionally freezes, so has to be rebooted. It's a little slow to switch between HD and non-HD channels, too.

S1 I'd agree – using my Sky HD box is easy and intuitive. My box can be a little noisy too, making some distinctly PC-style sounds at times, but in fairness, it hasn't crashed once. The biggest issue to me was Sky's decision to preconfigure each box to 1080i output, regardless of the content being broadcast: it seemed a compromise to me. But now I've lived with it for a while, I can understand why: I tried using the box's 'Automatic' mode, which means the HDMI output switches from standard-def to 720p to 1080i as required, and it freaked my plasma TV out, causing it to lose its 'lock' to the HDMI signal when I changed channels. Sticking to 1080i for everything isn't as purist – but it works.

S2 Once we'd conquered a conflict between the Sky HD box's scaler and our projector's, everything was fine. We solved it by setting the box to 'Automatic' output and letting the projector upscale non-HD content – the exact opposite of the above!

IS THERE MUCH HD TELLY TO WATCH?

TW There's far less HD content available via Telewest Teleport than via Sky HD, but we do get any ITV HD content – including World Cup football – that you can't get on Sky. The BBC HD content remains the most impressive.

S1 Mainstream telly content is thin on the ground at the moment, but to be honest, that doesn't really bother me – I'm not interested in soaps or reality shows. There's enough of the stuff I like to watch (films, sport, documentaries) to keep me going, though I'd welcome more! I think I'm in danger of becoming an HD junkie...

Documentaries tend to be made in very high quality: look out for *Planet Earth* on BBC HD

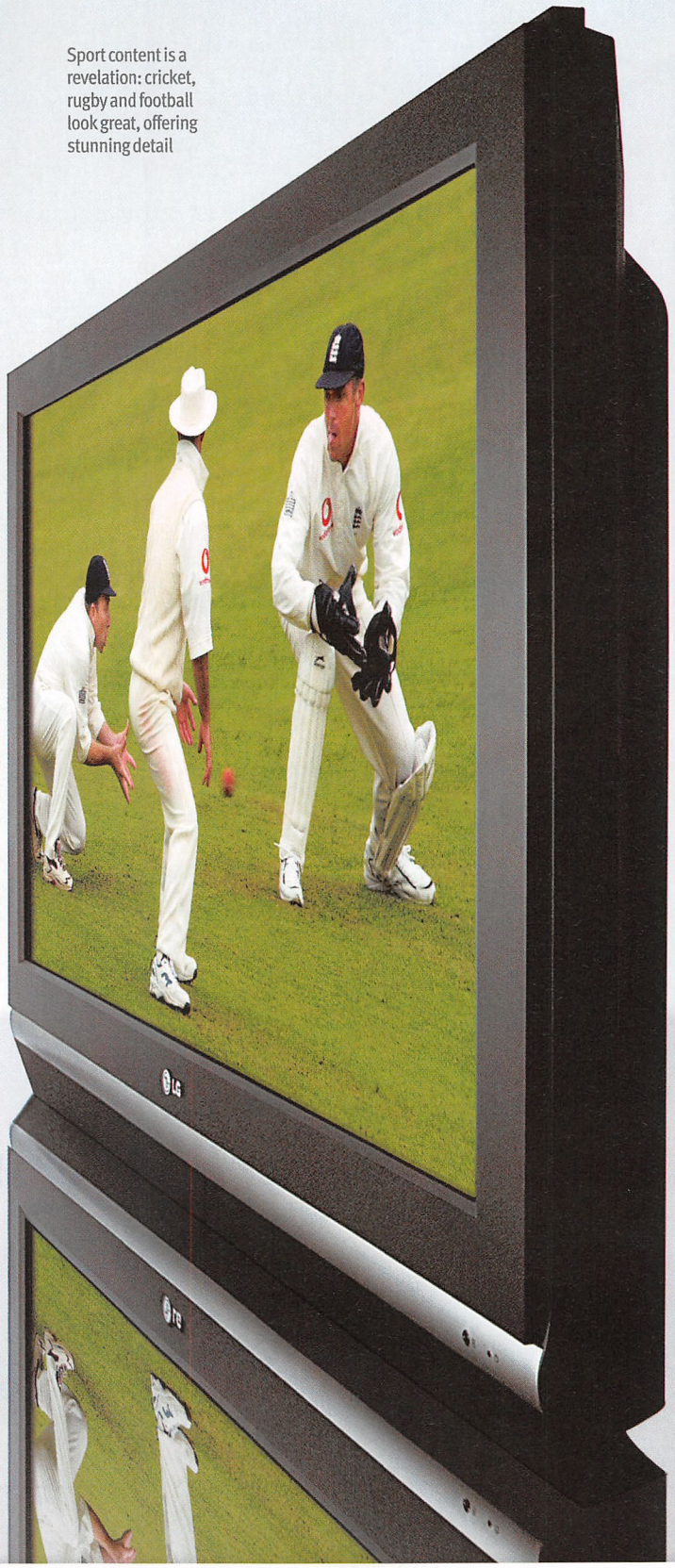
HIGH-DEF A WEEK IN THE LIFE...

DAY ONE

THE INSTALL It's Christmas come early: the nice Sky man has arrived with our shiny new HD box. He's a model of efficiency (and manners – check out those Smurf-style plastic slip-ons!) as our box is wired and fired in no time

DAY TWO

START SURFING The familiar Sky EPG poses no problems. Stabbing that red 'HD Channels' button is a daily habit as we search out new content. We're not addicted, honest...



Sport content is a revelation: cricket, rugby and football look great, offering stunning detail

S2 I agree, it's straight to the HD button every time! We've found ourselves rewatching films and shows we've already seen, just to enjoy them again in high-def.

SO IT LOOKS GREAT, THEN?

TW It looks superb – especially the BBC stuff like *Planet Earth*, *Later with Jools Holland* and *Hannibal*. But perhaps the most unexpected benefit is the sound quality – the step up to Dolby Digital 5.1 surround sound is really noticeable.

S1 I'd prefer 720p for fast-moving football, but in the main, it's fantastic. A few shows on Sky One HD and Discovery HD have looked less impressive, but even then, they're better than standard-def images.

S2 Because of the scaler problems we had early on, I wasn't that knocked-out initially. But now, with my HD system fully sorted, it's an utterly awesome experience for both sound and vision.

"Having HD is like tasting fine wines: switch back to the standard stuff, which you used to enjoy, and it suddenly seems terrible"

ANY GRIPES?

TW There's still some shimmer in fast-moving sequences, particularly sport. That's 1080i for you. I also don't like the way you can't set the TVDrive to switch automatically between 1080i and 720p.

S1 A bigger hard-disk wouldn't hurt. I've filled mine pretty quickly. There's more capacity on the box (for video-on-demand services) – I'd like to be able to use it now.

S2 Only a few of Sky One HD's programmes are actually high-def. I'd also like to know the quality of the HD being fed me: the EPG should carry a 1080i/720p banner to keep me informed. Finally – and at the risk of sounding like Swiss Toni – HD is like fine wine: go back to the standard stuff, and it suddenly seems terrible. More HD, please!

TOP 10 HD BROADCASTS

1 Planet Earth
We always knew it would be good – even on standard-def, the cinematography was stunning. But in HD? Wow!

2 Bleak House
Strike Two for the BBC. Lovely

3 24
The best thing on Sky One looks even better on Sky HD

4 Eric Clapton: Crossroads
So far, Artsworld HD has delivered consistently brilliant quality – but this is the very best

5 Kalahari
The star attraction of National Geographic

6 Sport
Footy, rugby and cricket all shine in HD. 720p video would be even better

7 Wallace and Gromit
Terrific film, great quality – a family treat that looks even better with the extra resolution

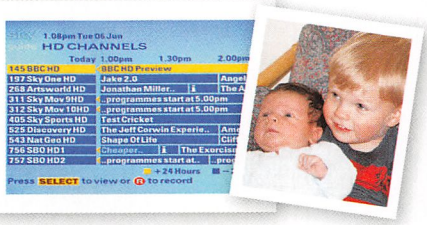
8 Man On Fire
Far more of an adults-only experience, but a real home cinema sensation that looks fantastic in high def

9 BBC HD PREVIEW Watch assorted teasers and drool

10 National Trust
Another star of Artsworld HD: stuffy, maybe, but beautiful

DAY THREE & FOUR

GETTING USED TO IT It's a real shame Sky Movies HD doesn't kick-off until 5pm each day, but the Test Match is providing ample compensation. That said, the BBC HD Preview is strangely compulsive viewing, too

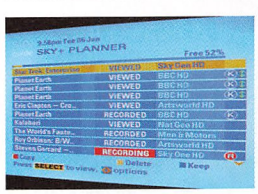


DAY FIVE & SIX

FAMILY FUN We plan our timeshifting a bit better, setting the hard-disk to copy a few movies overnight. That gives the kids the chance to watch *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* in HD. Cracking stuff, Gromit!

DAY SEVEN

MORE SPACE! A 160GB hard-disk sounds great on paper, but it doesn't take much to nearly fill it. HD content is space-hungry: we're having to delete stuff all the time to keep on top of things



Two great shows under one roof

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Is it worth it? The verdict is in – and we're sold on both systems

TELEWEST TVDRIVE

★★★★★

£ free

FOR

Teleport video-on-demand service means you can watch HD programmes whenever you want, and can pause, fast-forward and rewind them, too; looks and sounds bags better than it did at launch

AGAINST

Much more limited content than Sky HD

VERDICT

We love the flexibility of Teleport, but Sky has a far superior choice of HD content

Recording capacity
The TVDrive has a substantial 160GB hard-disk fitted – but we'd like more, ideally

Output options
You get the choice of both component and HDMI video outputs. The latter looks best

A little noisy to use
By and large, the TVDrive works well, but it can be noisy: the cooling fan can be particularly intrusive

The occasional crash
This is perhaps our only real gripe: our box has crashed several times, requiring a reboot. We'd like more stability

Easy to operate
Although the Sky system is slicker, Telewest's operating system is good – and it has video-on-demand

TECH SPECS

TV TUNERS 3
CAPACITY 160GB (40 hours HD/ 80 hours SD)
VIDEO OUTPUTS HDMI, component, RGB Scart
AUDIO OUTPUTS Analogue phono, digital optical
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 8 x 40 x 28cm
WEIGHT 4kg

SKY HD

★★★★★

£ 300

FOR

Great Sky+ recording functionality; fine selection of sports and movies; can look and sound stunning

AGAINST

Not cheap; we'd like more of that 300GB capacity available for recordings today

VERDICT

Sky HD is worth the wait. Pair it with the right sound and vision kit, and your TV watching will be transformed

Recording capacity
300GB sounds great, but you can only access 160GB of it. The rest is for 'future upgrades'

Video options
HDMI and component are fitted – but Sky tells us the latter socket wil be deleted eventually

Sky+ functionality
Like the TVDrive, you can pause live TV and much more – but the Telewest system is even more flexible

Whee, clunk, whirr
So far, our box has been very stable (unlike the TVDrive), but it can be a noisy little fella, too

Brilliant usability
The Sky guide is a joy to use: even with the added complexity of HD, it's still a breeze to live with every day

TECH SPECS

TV TUNERS 2 HD/ 2 SD
CAPACITY 300GB – but only 160GB available for recordings (40 hours HD/80 hours SD)
VIDEO OUTPUTS HDMI, component, RGB Scart
AUDIO OUTPUTS Analogue phono, digital optical
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 8 x 40 x 30cm
WEIGHT 5kg

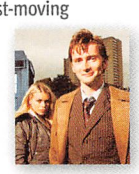
MY VERDICT TW

For the first three months, Telewest had very limited HD content. Picture quality was rather grainy, and surround sound was only Dolby Surround (not Dolby Digital 5.1), so the initial experience was a bit disappointing. However, once the BBC and ITV trial broadcasts began from May, both sound and vision were transformed. I love it!

MY HD DREAM I can't wait to see everything I currently enjoy watching in HD. If I had to pick one show? *Lost*. I'm addicted...

MY VERDICT SKY 1

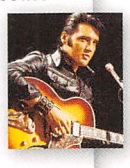
I'll confess, I was a little dismayed when I first heard about Sky's decision to broadcast everything in 1080i. It's good, don't get me wrong, but for me, progressive-scan – ie, 720p – is the better solution for fast-moving content and film. But after living with the box? It really doesn't matter. This is how TV should be. You owe it to your eyes to buy it.



MY HD DREAM OK, so I'm a big kid, but I'd love to see *Doctor Who* in HD. I can't wait to see *Band Of Brothers* in its HD form either

MY VERDICT SKY 2

HD makes everyday TV so much more cinematic – and I don't just say that because we watch via a projector. The colours, detail and motion are so much richer, clearer and lifelike. It sounds damn impressive, too. It's not cheap, but you could save yourself a fortune in DVD rental fees: we've only watched one disc since HD arrived in the house.



MY HD DREAM HD footage of exclusive, private-club performances by our favourite artists, giving us a front-row seat at the gig

This cracking quartet of **HD-Ready projectors** offer bigger-screen thrills on a budget. Whether it's sport, movies or music DVDs, they bring all the action home

Test Express

PROJECTORS £1290 – £1700

Fancy 300in of high-def fun?

BenQ PE7700

★★★★☆ £1290

THIS, OUR 2005 projector Product of the Year, has received a £388 price cut, but it still falls behind all its test rivals. It hasn't become a bad performer; however, technology waits for no man, woman or projector, and the newer designs here offer greater performance, even allowing for that price drop.

Using Texas Instruments' HD2+ DLP chip, this large-ish machine is well specified. Set-up is easy enough, though levelling the machine isn't as swift as it is with the InFocus and the Panasonic. The short-throw design means this is another HD-Ready machine suitable for smaller spaces.

FOR
Recent price-cut; capable HD-Ready design

AGAINST
Newer rivals now offer even greater performance

VERDICT
Our champ is getting on, but at its cheaper price it remains a competitive buy

The BenQ only suffers in comparison with others

Up and running, so long as you haven't seen its test rivals, the BenQ offers superb contrast, detail and motion stability. Drop in *The Brothers Grimm*, though, and compare the BenQ to the latest machines, and you realise it lags in all picture quality areas, but particularly with colour vibrancy and detail. On a positive note, its ability with movement remains highly competitive.

Overall, though, the champ now looks a touch tired. If you already own this BenQ, that's no bad thing. It was the best sub-£2000 HD-Ready machine of its time, but we think it might be time for a PE7700 Mk2.

A cracking all-round picture, but others here can do it better

InFocus IN76

★★★★★ £1700

CHOOSING THIS TEST'S style champ wasn't tough. The InFocus (formerly ScreenPlay) IN76 is curvaceously gorgeous and, even better, the neat stand helps you swiftly set up your image. Add a short-throw design, which means it's possible to deliver a large image from a short distance, and you've got the ideal coffee-table projector. Like all but the Panasonic entry, this is a DLP design, with an HD-Ready 1280 x 720 resolution chipset from Texas Instruments and a PixelWorks processor.

FOR
Excellent image, including great contrast and colour brilliance; great looks and ease of use, too

AGAINST
Not as capable with movement as the Panasonic

VERDICT
It's a gorgeous-looking and highly capable HD projector

What's this sleek looker like in operation?

These technologies combine superbly well to present a lush, cinematic experience. Spin *The Brothers Grimm*, and the IN76 whips up wonderfully vivid colours, coping well with Terry Gilliam's jam-packed frames, and you get a real feel of 'being at the cinema'. It's also a king of contrast, confirmed by its ability with the Man in Black's suit in the Johnny Cash biopic *Walk The Line*.

This excellence is true with DVD and high def, though a favourite HD subject, sport, can expose the IN76's Achilles' heel (should that be footballer's metatarsal). Motion-tracking isn't as assured as it is with the Panasonic, and you notice occasional juddering.

That, however, is the IN76's only negative – hence it still receives a highly complimentary five stars.

There are no doubts about which product is the style king

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £1290 – £1700	BENQ PE7700	INFOCUS IN76	PANASONIC PT-AE900	THEMESCENE HD72i
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£1290	£1700	£1500	£1500
TYPE	DLP	DLP	LCD	DLP
ASPECT RATIO	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:10 (supports 16:9)
MAX SCREEN SIZE	118in	146in	146in	300in
THROW RATIO	1.18-1.61	1.53-1.94	1.34-1.39	1.60-1.90
PROGRESSIVE SCAN	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC	PAL/NTSC
HDMI	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
DVI-D	Yes	Yes, via M1-DA	No	Yes
COMPONENT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
RGB-SCART	No	No	Yes	Yes, via supplied adapter
S-VIDEO	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
COMPOSITE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DIMENSIONS (HWD)	11 x 38 x 30cm	12 x 36 x 36cm	10 x 34 x 27cm	10 x 35 x 25cm
WEIGHT	6kg	4kg	4kg	3kg
HOW THEY RATED				
PICTURE	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★☆
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★½	★★★★☆	★★★★½
VERDICT	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★

THROW RATIO You don't need a huge room to accommodate modern projectors, because many of them will produce a huge picture from only a few metres away. Multiply the smaller figure by the width of the image you want (say, in cm), and this will give you the distance the projector needs to be away (also in centimetres). A smaller figure allows use in a smaller room.

TEST RESULT We'd be chuffed to pieces to own any one of these four high-def-ready models

IN A STUNNING example of the blistering pace of projector technology, last year's Award-winning BenQ, even with an almost £400 price slash, fails not only to hold onto its crown, but also its five-star verdict. However if funds are tight, the now-four-star PE7700 remains a great-value HD-Ready buy.

Another big surprise is that in the face of a three-pronged DLP-based attack, the LCD-based Panasonic PE7700 wins. This is, in part, down to the fact we know you can pick it up with a cracking discount, but it's also down to its indisputably great picture, especially with motion. True, for detail the HD72i blows you away, while the IN76 has unbeatable contrast. However, of the four, the Pana edges it.

Panasonic PT-AE900

★★★★★ £1500

WHEN WE FIRST reviewed this machine we warned BenQ to beware. Perhaps we should consider a sideline in fortune telling, because the Panasonic looks set to steal the BenQ's crown. And, remarkably to some, the PT-AE900 manages to win this test using 'dated' LCD technology, instead of the more prevalent DLP.

The main criticism of LCD projectors is the 'chicken wire' effect, where you notice latticing across the image. This machine isn't totally devoid of this; however, you only notice it during extended shots of a similar colour background – for example, a high-up camera looking down at a football match. It's fairly rare, then.

This projector really gets things moving

The trade-off is the PT-AE900's superb fast-motion handling compared to its trio of DLP-based rivals. Spin a busy movie – such as any *Star Wars* – and the screen bursts with vitality, skin-tones looking especially good. Detail, and perhaps contrast, too, falls just short of the astonishingly high levels available from the InFocus and ThemeScene entrants. However, bear in mind this Panasonic's 'real' price – shop around and you'll easily knock a good £400 off our suggested tag. Add brilliantly easy set-up – that front set-up joystick is inspired – and you've got a stunning-value HD-Ready projector.

FOR Unmatched fast-motion tracking; realistic colour palette; good detail; simple to set up; price

AGAINST Not quite the contrast or detail levels of leading DLP-based rivals

VERDICT Uses an older design to stunning effect, and availability of great deals make this some unit

Plain looks and an 'old-fashioned' LCD spec belie a cracking machine

ThemeScene HD72i

★★★★★ £1500

THIS HD72i IS is slightly different from its test rivals, in that it uses a 16:10 aspect ratio chip, rather than the standard 16:9 one – though, like the others, it's a high-quality item from Texas Instruments. This latest 16:10 chip enables 10-bit processing, consequently – it's claimed – better video performance. The key thing is that this projector works perfectly well with standard 16:9 source material, and has a cracking picture to boot.

With high def or DVD, things are looking up

In operation, fed DVD or HD, the HD72i does indeed look fantastic, and a particular area of joy is the amount of detail it digs up from movies. Whether its Ewan McGregor's natty cream Obi-Wan cardi, or the Man in Black's suit, the ThemeScene delivers with the determination of a sailor frantically scooping water from his leaking dinghy. Also, thanks to wonderful contrast and colour, and you get a brilliant image that works in even lighter environments – handy for summertime viewing when light pervades your curtains.

Our only two moans are that we'd like an even smoother image with rapid action – though it's better than the BenQ and InFocus – and that set-up is a touch fiddly. Elsewhere, the HD72i ticks all the boxes – build, features and price – and we recommend you demo it.

FOR Great image, with class-leading detail; compact

AGAINST Panasonic's LCD just shades it on the movement-handing front; not as easy to set up as some

VERDICT Excellent value: this is a great HD-Ready buy

An excellent image, especially adept at digging out the fine detail

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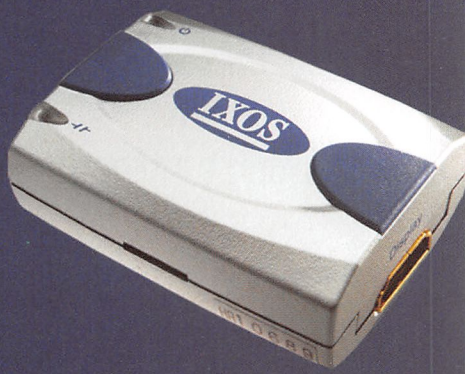

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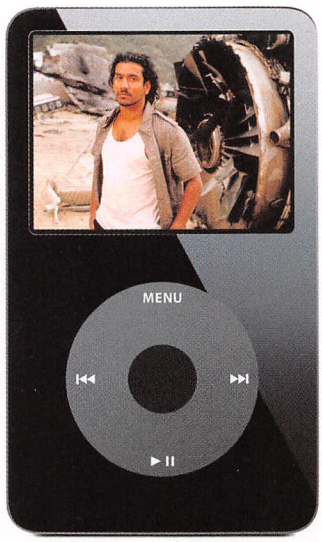
« SHURE E2C £60

Block out the noise of plane engines and equally whiny poolside children – without turning your tunes up to ear-melting, battery-draining levels – with these noise-isolating in-ear headphones. Persevere with the choice of snug-fitting ear-buds and you'll be rewarded with an involving, enveloping listen that can only be bettered in the in-ear world by the E2C's pricier siblings.

VERDICT Find the right fit and these headphones offer delightful sounds in an incredibly lightweight package

★★★★★



« APPLE iPOD (60GB) £299

Apple sold more than 22 million iPods last year, so it's a justifiable success. The flagship iPod remains the best-sounding MP3 player you can buy, especially if you invest in this 60GB version and rip your tunes in the Apple Lossless format. Add a decent pair of headphones (like the two sets here) and your mobile music experience will be revolutionised. The video capability can't match that of the Archos, but – along with the photo ability – all adds to the entertainment options.

VERDICT Apple's flagship iPod remains the best sound and vision all-rounder to pocket

★★★★★

« SENNHEISER PX100 £35

Awards keep coming for these top folding 'phones, available in iPod-matching white or black and with a sturdy, sunglasses-style case. They dig up depth, detail and punch that freebie headphones only dream of.

VERDICT The most cost-effective upgrade for any portable, and even better value if you shop around

★★★★★

» 6 OF THE BEST

MP3 TO GO

Take your tunes and more with you this summer, with our pick of the best pocket entertainers

« SAMSUNG YP-Z5 £110

If you can't stand the thought of swelling Apple's coffers any further – oh, and want a superb-sounding little MP3 player, too – fork out on this featherlight (58g) Samsung instead. It's a direct rival for the 1GB iPod nano, but offers a sweeter, more dynamic sound, a bigger display and (at a mighty 35 hours) over double the battery life.

VERDICT If you're a PC owner wanting to tote around 200 tunes, give this sleek Samsung player a listen

★★★★★

» ARCHOS AV700 £400

DVD portables are great (we test four on p74), but if you don't want to lug discs around – and want a longer battery life –this 40GB Archos is the answer. It'll record up to 160 hours of video direct from your TV, its 7in screen is highly watchable, and music and video sound's decent, too. Hunt around for a deal.

VERDICT Be tempted by Archos's tasty TV takeaway

★★★★★

« LOGITECH MM50 £100

We first praised this iPod speaker system late last year, and it's already a suitcase staple. Aided by a neat zip-up case, the 700g mm50 is easily portable, but big enough to enliven any hotel room or barbeque. Don't expect party-starting bass or the smoothest of treble, but be impressed by the rechargeable battery, and the ability to house and charge almost any iPod. Hunt for a bargain before you buy, as we've seen great deals.

VERDICT Got an iPod? Find a place in your case for the mm50

★★★★★

At the heart every hi-fi system lies a high-quality **stereo amplifier** – and while these might be at the budget end of the market, one listen is enough to tell you the best are pure gold

Group Test

STEREO AMPLIFIERS **£250-£350**

A quality quartet of amps to add musical muscle

What's new?

This price bracket is one of the most hotly contested classes in the amplifier market, if not the whole of hi-fi. If that doesn't get the heart racing with anticipation – yes, really – then check out the line-up. We have the previously peerless and imperious Cambridge Audio offering, the Azur 640 v2.0. Hot on its heels is last month's issue-stealing Marantz amp, the PM7001. To cap it all, we have two brand-new entries from two of the biggest names in hi-fi, NAD and Rotel. Good selection, eh?

What do you get for your money?

It seems almost too belittling to describe these integrated amps as 'a great introduction to hi-fi', but at these prices, it's fair to say they represent many people's first foray into the world of separates – lucky you, because all of them are packed with high-quality materials and technology.

"All of these amps use high-quality materials and mature technology"

SAVVY SHOPPER

1 Pick your input

Most inputs on the back of the amp are at line level, which suits the output of devices such as CD players, tuners and recorders. You can use any of these inputs for any source, but on some amps the CD input will have a better-sounding signal path.

2 Beef up your system

Some of these integrated amps can double as preamplifiers, being used in tandem with a power amp. If the amp has preout sockets, you can hook up an external power amp. This will allow you to boost sonic performance by biamping your speakers, which improves both detail and dynamics.

3 Power isn't everything

Apart from giving you no idea of its sound characteristics, an amp's power output – in watts per channel – doesn't even tell you how loud your system will go. This depends as much on your speakers. Most new amps will make modern speakers go loud!

JARGON BUSTER

Power rating: Lies, damned lies and statistics – don't fall for the notion that fat power ratings mean good, or even loud sound. They don't.

RATINGS EXPLAINED

A flush of five stars shows a spectacular performer that will excel in just about any system. A four-star rating signifies an amp that excels in some areas more than others. Such an amp can come into its own with an expertly matched system. Three stars will have some positives, but just aren't as good. Do avoid two and one-star products.

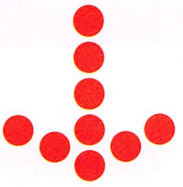
★★★★★ Excellent

★★★★☆ Very good

★★★☆☆ Average

★★☆☆☆ Below par

★☆☆☆☆ Don't bother



Cambridge Audio Azur 640A V2.0
£300 Page 70

Marantz PM7001
£350
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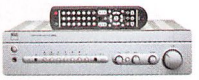


NAD C325BEE
£250
Page 71

Rotel RA-05
£350
Page 71

BUYER'S GUIDE

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

Cambridge Audio Azur 640A V2.0

★★★★☆ £300

WELL, WELL, WELL... who'd have thought it? We don't tend to cut to the chase, but we realise you might currently be triple-checking the star rating at the start of this review – so, in Grandstand vidi-printer style, let's put it in writing, too: Cambridge Audio Azur 640A V2.0 – four stars. That's FOUR STARS!

Many of our review team couldn't believe it, but – on listening to the new Rotel amplifier – it really is the only course of action, staggering though that might seem. The Cambridge remains a really strong four-star product, but it's no longer the best in class.

The unit still looks the part, with decent build quality and sensibly laid-out, durable buttons. It also boasts a smart remote. There's a none-too-shabby 75w of power per channel, together with multiroom support thanks to the Control Bus input and support for infrared control. And, lest we forget, a wealth of internal upgrades have been added to this version 2.0 of the Azur 640A.

Rest assured, it does still sound strikingly good. If this were a mineral water, it would have come from the clearest and cleanest of idyllic springs, so open and revealing is the soundstage. Meanwhile, it delivers something of a lesson in timing to almost every amp the right side of £400. Flick to The Streets' *Never Went To Church*, and every kick-drum and snare lands perfectly in time, with punch and power aplenty.

On the subject of said punch and power, we feel obliged to mention the 640A's tight, agile bass. Roots Manuva's classic *Witness Dub* shows this amp is capable of lightning-fast basslines, while remaining detailed and composed.

So, why the four? Well, simply, the Rotel RA-05. Switching between the two, as our disbelieving ears made us do many times, we were amazed to find comparative shortcomings in the Cambridge. A slight brightness to the treble seemed suddenly obvious,

> "Switch to The Streets, and every kick-drum and snare hit lands perfectly in time"

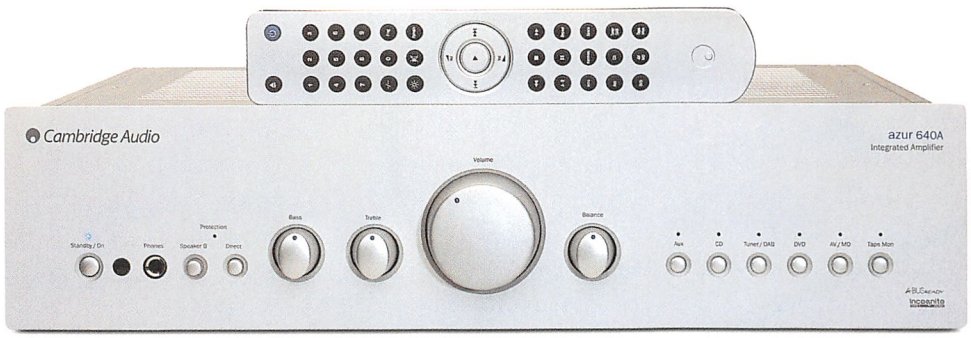
especially at loud volume. Listen to Springsteen's *My Oklahoma Home*, and you'll find the midrange lacks the immediate intimacy and refinement of the Rotel, thanks to the latter's incredible insight and smooth delivery.

It's been a long time coming, but despite this amplifier still offering so much, it's finally had its ante well and truly upped by a machine that just does everything that little bit better for only a few quid more. Listening to this amp, you'll be amazed that it can be bettered at this money, but – trust us – it can.

FOR
Clear, open soundstage; superb timing; deep, tight bass.

AGAINST
Rotel's RA-05 is better

VERDICT
Still very good indeed, but no longer the greatest



Strong in so many areas, yet the Cambridge has truly had the rug pulled from under its little feet

Marantz PM7001

★★★★☆ £350

WE'VE GOT SOME explaining to do. Much like the Cambridge Audio review, we really do understand if this four-star verdict has put you all off-kilter. It was, after all, just last month we had nothing but praise for this Marantz amp, giving it five stars for performance.

Well, what can we do but point slightly nervously at the RA-05 amp on our right, and say 'It's Rotel's fault'? From nowhere, the RA-05 has not so much upset the applecart as tipped it over, chopped it into pieces, and thrown it onto the fire. And, again, the quality of the new class-leader has to equal a star difference here – it's that good.

> "It's a very different sound from the others – making it really worth an audition"

Yet the Marantz remains, as a four-star verdict testifies, a very capable product. The quality of build and finish is a good sign of the fine things to come – it has plenty of physical presence and weight without looking ugly or bulky. There's 70w of power per channel, plus twin speaker outputs and preamp out/power-amp in sockets – should you wish to beef up your system by adding a power amp and biamping speakers, or adding an external surround processor.

Sonically, it's certainly a very different sound from the others here, making it worth an audition. Most noticeable is the refined midrange, which is luxuriously smooth. Coupled with the even-handed tonal balance it makes for a very listenable sound, which is as happy as an Aussie at a BBQ when playing at high volume.

It keeps time well, too: it might not be quite as brilliantly rhythmic as the Cambridge, but it's more than adequate.

Likewise, there's plenty of detail, but without hitting the level of insight of the Rotel, as Bruce Springsteen's latest microphone-half-way-down-his-throat recording can testify.

While the overall sound is solid and controlled, there are a few unnecessary extra pounds around the PM7001's bass. It's not the softness heard in some earlier Marantz amps, but it lacks the cycling-short tightness of its rivals when dealing with more monstrous bass workouts.

As we might soon become tired of reiterating, there's a new benchmark in this class. This Marantz still sounds great, and if it's a smooth, balanced sound you're after, audition this amp. But the raising of the barrier by Rotel means the PM7001 has to drop a star.

FOR
Solid build; smooth overall sound; even tonal balance; good detail retrieval

AGAINST
Slight softness to bass; lacks the extra level of detail and all-round class of the Rotel

VERDICT
Individual enough sonically to still merit closer inspection

The midrange is as sweet and smooth as, well, a banana smoothie – so might be just to your taste

NAD C325BEE

★★★☆☆ £250

WE'RE CONFUSED. WE can tell that Bjorn Erik Edvardsen is the key man behind much of the new technology found inside this NAD amplifier – hence the 'BEE' portion of its product name. Mr Edvardsen's initials have graced several of NAD's best performers over the years, not least a long-time favourite of ours, the C320BEE. And that's what's confusing us – because sadly for NAD, the C325BEE is no five-starrer.

One thing it is, however, is well specified. There are seven line inputs, plus connections for headphones and MP3 players, together with 50w of power per channel. There's also a wealth of innovations. NAD's PowerDrive technology adjusts the power supply levels of the amplifier in line with what your music demands and your speakers can deal with. Meanwhile, Soft Clipping and BEE Clamp both help to keep your amplifier from being overdriven and keep it stable when stretched.

FOR
Plenty of features; even tonal balance; decent detail

AGAINST
Lacks subtlety and integration; timing is average

VERDICT
Despite the tantalising price, this amp sadly isn't up the job of challenging the classier performers on show here

No doubt you're as familiar as us with NAD amplifiers' build quality and design, which remain decent if uninspiring compared to some rivals.

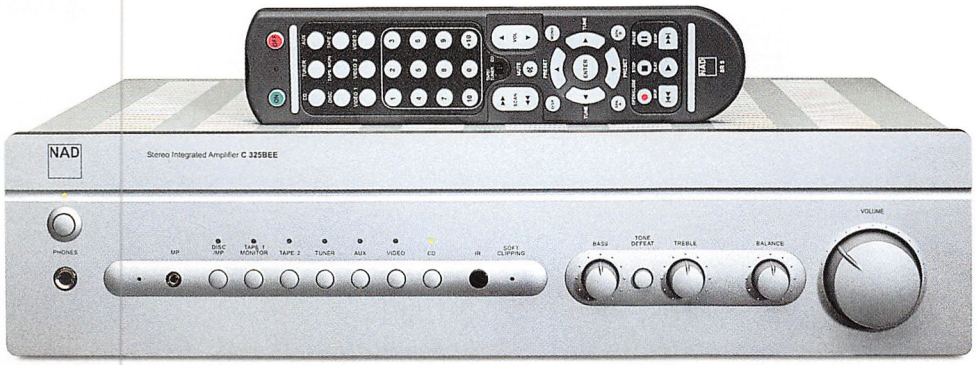
Blast out The Raconteurs' debut album, and you'll find the C325BEE capable of digging up plenty of detail, while offering a midrange full of body and a decent overall tonal balance. But while the individual parts of your music might all be present and sounding correct, it's in the sonic blending that this amp loses its composure and our praise. It just doesn't hang together musically.

Listening to Paul Simon's *Surprise*, which requires a delicate hand of control, the C325BEE seems to be throwing all the information into the ether, looking to you to do the integration. This lack of cohesion leaves your ears desperately trying to piece all the sounds together, especially in more challenging, layered tracks, making for a tiring and at times confusing listen. Its average timing only serves to compound a bumpy sonic ride.

> "A lack of integration left us all desperately trying to put sonic pieces together"

Not unconnected to a lack of control is an overall subtlety shortfall. Switch to classical music, and delicate strings sound rigid and brash, while voices lack smoothness and emotion. When push comes to shove, we simply found listening to all kinds of music nowhere near as enjoyable on this amplifier as others on the market and, indeed, in this test.

The NAD might be the cheapest, but it's found wanting in too many areas when up against this fierce competition.



Average timing compounds the integration problems, making the NAD hard work to hear

Rotel RA-05

★★★★★ £350

WE PROMISE it won't happen again, but – for once – we find ourselves agreeing with the hard-sell press release that accompanied the new Rotel RA-05 amplifier: "A new standard in affordable hi-fi separates", it says. And you know what? The hype is justified.

This is our first taster of Rotel's 06 Series, which includes three integrated amplifiers. This, the RA-05, sits between the £250 RA-04 (essentially the same spec, but without remote control) and the £500 RA-06. Available in black or silver finishes, the exterior is smart, solid and slimline, though nothing revolutionary to look at.

> "The most impressive thing about the Rotel amplifier is how easy it finds its work"

Underneath lies plenty of jiggery-pokery of which Rotel is justifiably proud. There's a Rotel-manufactured power supply doing the vital donkey work, and a symmetrical circuit-board layout, which keeps left and right channels separate and signal paths as short as possible. This combines to deliver 40 watts of power per channel and – more importantly – a very fine amplifier.

FOR
Devastatingly efficient at uncovering detail; beautifully refined delivery; effortless overall performance.

AGAINST
Apart from being tempted by the no-remote-but-£100-cheaper model, nothing

VERDICT
The Rotel RA-05 does everything asked of it in superb style

Despite its lithe appearance, and the fact that its power specification is the lowest in this test, one of the Rotel's most impressive sonic characteristics is how staggeringly easy it finds its work.

The Raconteurs' *Store Bought Bones* delivers plenty for it to think about, but like an experienced parent with a gaggle of kids in a sweetshop, this amp is ruthlessly efficient when it comes to control.

Basslines delve deep while remaining tight, while treble is clear, open and full of sparkle, without ever sounding bright or brash. Listen to any of the choral works on Eric Whitacre's *Cloudburst* album, and the Rotel shows off its expertly balanced tonal range – if we thought the Marantz amp had a smooth, refined midrange, then the RA-05 takes the biscuit.

However, perhaps most staggering is the detail you hear. We thought – in fact, we knew – the standard in this class was already sky-high, but this Rotel amp delights in somehow finding a higher plateau. Bruce Springsteen's homage to Pete Seeger, *The Seeger Sessions*, is a breathy, intimate recording, which finds the Rotel uncovering mountains of detail. Every croak from the Boss' voice, every delicately plucked guitar-string is full of expression, creating a frighteningly realistic sound.

Calling the RA-05 an excellent all-rounder just doesn't do it justice – this is a supreme specialist in every area of amplification. If you're staggered to find the Marantz and Cambridge amps at four stars, you're not alone – but this Rotel just had to be a clear star in front, which should tell you everything.

The Rotel digs up an amazing amount of detail for one in this price class – it's a clear winner

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TEST RESULT It takes something amazingly special to have us rejigging our sacred ratings left, right and centre – meet the **Rotel**

Rotel RA-05

★★★★★

£350

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION GROUP TEST WINNER

QUITE THE MONUMENTAL test, wasn't it? Two eagerly anticipated new arrivals met two massively impressive, previously five-star-rated amps, in the budget stereo amplifier test to end all tests.

Most startling is the quality of performance now available in this price bracket, yet – despite this – it was all-too-easy to call our winner. The Rotel RA-05 is an incredible all-rounder that delivers a dynamic, detailed sound, which is as capable when doing subtle as when delivering brawn. Tight bass, clear treble, smooth midrange: it has it all.

> "The Rotel is an incredible all-rounder, as happy doing subtle as it is doing brawn"

This all spelt trouble for both Marantz and Cambridge Audio, which we had previously envisaged battling to the death for this crown. In isolation, it would still be hard to find any serious faults with either amp, but once put up against the Rotel it's clear that both amplifiers pale by comparison.

Last, and unfortunately least, was the NAD, which among this company lacks the cohesion, timing and subtlety to live with the leader here – brilliant, Rotel!

BUYER'S GUIDE £

For more than 1400 test verdicts, check out our *Buyer's Guide* on p91

NOW ADD THESE

CD PLAYER
ARCAM DiVA CD73T

★★★★☆

£420

It might have been around the block a few times, but this is still a very versatile CD player with plenty to offer. It boasts an open, lucid, precise soundstage together with a fast and detailed delivery that'll get the very best from the Rotel.

STEREO SPEAKERS
EPOS M12.2

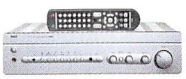
★★★★★

£450

These speakers truly stir the soul. Paired with an amp that matches them for resolution and agility – hello, RA-05 – then any style of music is delivered brilliantly. Superb speed and timing only serve to ice your hi-fi cake.

TOTAL SYSTEM £1220

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £250-£350	CAMBRIDGE AUDIO AZUR 640A V2.0	MARANTZ PM7001	NAD C325BEE	ROTEL RA-05
SPECIFICATION				
				
PRICE	£300	£350	£250	£350
POWER	75 w/channel	70 w/channel	50w/channel	40w/channel
LINE LEVEL INPUTS	6	6	7	6
PHONO STAGE	No	Yes, moving magnet	No	Yes, moving magnet
TAPE LOOPS	2	2	2	2
PREAMP OUT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
SPEAKER OUTS	2	2	2	2
TONE CONTROLS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
TONE DEFEAT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HEADPHONE OUT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
REMOTE CONTROL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FINISHES	Black, silver	Black, silver	Black, silver	Black, silver
DIMENSIONS	10x43x32cm	12x44x36cm	10x44x29cm	7x44x34cm
WEIGHT	7kg	11kg	8kg	6kg
HOW THEY RATED				
SOUND	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★
BUILD	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VERDICT	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★★

POWER Measured in watts per channel, this figure gives only a vague indication as to how loud the amplifier will drive a pair of speakers, and absolutely no idea of what quality of sound the amplifier will deliver. Note that our winning amp, the Rotel, is by far the 'weakest' in this regard.
LINE LEVEL INPUTS All of these models should have sufficient inputs for your various sources, such as CD player, tuner, MiniDisc or iPod.
PHONO STAGE Two of these amplifiers – the Cambridge and the NAD –will require an off-board phono stage if you want to use them with a turntable. We would recommend the 540P from Cambridge Audio, part of the Azur range.
TAPE LOOPS These line level pairs of inputs and outputs allow you to connect a recording device, so you can record and monitor using the amp.
PREAMP OUT They allow you to add a separate power amplifier at a later stage, if you desire, in the hope of achieving a better-quality sound.
TONE CONTROLS Bass and treble dials let you tweak the sound of the amplifier depending on the size and sonic characteristics of your room. These should be used with caution, though, so as not to upset the intrinsic balance of the amp.
TONE DEFEAT In an ideal world, you would bypass the tone controls, which are likely to colour the sound unnecessarily, creating a system that is naturally balanced in your room.
HEADPHONE OUT For connecting heaphones.
REMOTE CONTROL Armchair convenience.

With **portable DVD players** now available for under £100, why spend three times as much? We test four premium players to find out what extra entertainment they offer for the money

Test Express

PORTABLE DVD PLAYERS **£240-£300**

Which player should you pack?

Goodmans GDVD100WLCD

★★★☆☆ £240

WE FIRST LOOKED at this Goodmans player in our MP3 ULTIMATE GUIDE last year, when it won four stars – not least thanks to its 10in screen. That screen still has an inch on two of its rivals here, but with newer designs now available, how does this portable fare in 2006?

Well, the spec's stood up fairly well: there's an SD/MMC card input – handy for viewing your holiday snaps – plus support for most DVD formats and S-Video/composite video outs for hooking up to a TV. This is the only player that won't play MP3s, though.

It's also a presentable-enough design – not as polished as, say, the Toshiba, but it looks svelte enough, even with the battery pack attached. A shame, then, that said battery lasts for just 2.5 hours – you can forget about watching *King Kong* on the plane.

FOR
Good colour balance; detail levels are decent; easily portable

AGAINST
Soft picture; some digital noise; unimpressive battery life

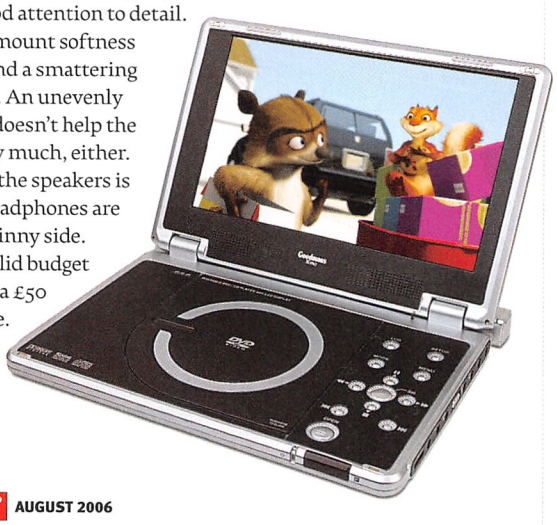
VERDICT
If you're on a budget, then this may tempt you, but the standard soars if you can spend £50 more

Decent detail but a touch of digital noise

The Goodmans renders *Fun with Dick and Jane*'s rich colours evenly, but they can be a tad lacklustre. More positively, skintones highlight the player's good attention to detail. There's a fair amount softness to the image, and a smattering of digital noise. An unevenly backlit screen doesn't help the overall stability much, either.

Sound from the speakers is fine, but the headphones are on the bright, tinny side.

This still a solid budget buy, but an extra £50 gets much more.



A big screen and svelte looks – but average in action

Mustek MP100

★★★☆☆ £250

THIS MUSTEK IS right up against the Goodmans unit in this test. With much cheaper models available, and being only £50 less than the Tosh and Pana offerings, we're hoping to see a decent level of performance.

Things don't get off to the best of starts when you discover there are no contrast or sharpness settings – only the colours and screen brightness can be adjusted. The screen itself is a 10in LCD that can be swivelled through 180 degrees and also folded down into a portable tablet. Build is solid enough, while the design is clear and efficient, if far from exciting.

FOR
Sharp and stable picture; good feature count and disc support; flexible screen is a nice touch

AGAINST
Lacks extra level of detail; poor contrast; rather unnatural colour balance

VERDICT
Boasts good spec for a mid-range price, and is watchable, but picture quality is far from perfect

Plug in your pictures, TV and more

In terms of spec, it scores well. There's an MMC/SD card-reader, composite, S-Video and digital coaxial outputs, two headphone jacks, a USB input and support for most DVD discs and DivX and MP3 files. The three-hour battery life is okay, if nothing special.

Watching *Lucky Number Slevin*, the colour balance could be better. Dark black scenes are too gloomy, while blocks of black lack definition. By contrast, bright colours are a little too over-blown. Detail isn't a strong point in general for the MP100.

However, it's a stable, sharp picture, with no obvious problems with motion, noise or flickering. Sound quality is fine, too.

You can buy a better picture, but if you're after a versatile portable on a budget, the MP100's worth a look.

That 10in screen can swivel round to be used tablet-style

FACTS AND FIGURES

PRICE RANGE £230 – £380	GOODMANS GDVD100WLCD	MUSTEK MP100	PANASONIC DVD-LX97	TOSHIBA SD-P2800
SPECIFICATION				
PRICE	£240	£250	£300	£300
PLAYBACK	DVD, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, DivX	DVD, DVD-R/-RW, DVD+R/+RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, DivX	DVD, DVD-Audio, DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW, CD, CD-R/-RW, MP3, DivX, DVD-RAM	DVD, DVD-Audio, DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW, DVD-RAM, CD, CD-R/-RW, MP3, DivX
OUTPUTS	S-Video, composite digital coaxial audio	S-Video, composite, digital coaxial audio	Composite, digital optical audio	Component, S-Video, composite, digital optical
INPUTS	USB	USB	–	–
SD/MMC CARD SLOT	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/No	Yes/Yes
DOLBY/DTS	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
PROG SCAN (PAL/NTSC)	Yes/No	Yes/No	No/No	Yes/Yes
SCREEN SIZE	10in	10in	9in	9in
DIMENSIONS (HWD)	3x27x18cm	5x28x20cm	5x24x19cm	5x28x19cm
WEIGHT (INC. BATTERY)	1.1kg	1.2kg	1.1kg	1.3kg
HOW THEY RATED				
PICTURE	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★
SOUND	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆
VERDICT	★★★☆☆	★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★★★★

PLAYBACK Check for format compatibility with your home DVD recorder or PC so you can take your own recordings with you. The same goes for music files, too: you can pack a lot of MP3 tunes on a single CD or DVD.

SD/MMC CARD SLOT If your digital camera or camcorder can record to these memory cards, a suitably equipped player can act as a handy picture or video viewer.

PROG SCAN Progressive scan enables clearer, flicker-free DVD delivery – works with PAL, NTSC or both types of disc.

TEST RESULT Raid your holiday fund to afford **Toshiba's** excellent portable player

IT'S CLEAR THAT extra cash buys a much better portable DVD experience compared to sub-£100 players. All four models here offer good performance, plus extras like memory-card inputs, clever screens and travel accessories.

The Mustek and Goodmans efforts are found wanting now in terms of battery life, but are still capable of delivering decent portable entertainment at inviting prices.

However, pay a little extra, and both the Panasonic and Toshiba portables offer an even-more polished package. The Panasonic's six-hour battery life is a frequent-flyer's dream, but if pure picture quality is your key concern, then the Toshiba should clearly be your travel companion this summer.

Panasonic DVD-LX97

★★★★☆ £300

WHILE OTHERS IN this test seem keen to push the fact that they could be used as a second-room player at home, this Panasonic is resolutely ready to roam.

Its wanderlust is shown by the inclusion of a single video output (lowest-quality composite), yet it also has a bundle of extra travel accessories, in the form of an in-car charging device and a bracket to attach the screen to the back of a headrest. However, the big vote-winner here is the battery life, at a whopping six hours.

Take your movies, music and more with you

To attach to a headrest, or just for general use, the 9in screen is on a hinge, so it can fold back on itself completely. It's equally as flexible with playback formats, supporting all DVD discs – including DVD-RAM and dual-layer – plus DivX, MP4, MP3 and WMA files, either on disc or via the SD card input.

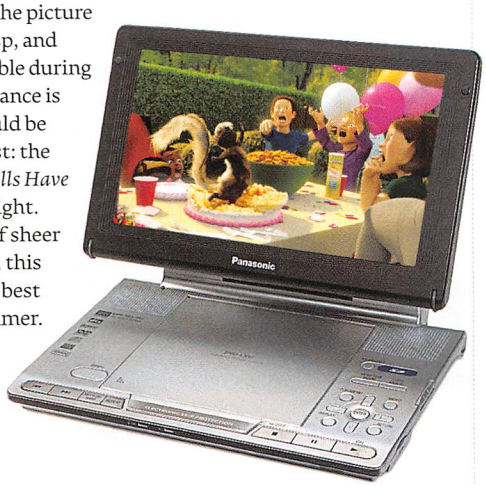
Surprisingly, given all the extras supplied, there are no free headphones, but pop on your own pair and the Panasonic sounds good, with plenty of bottom-end grunt to proceedings. The picture quality is clean and crisp, and sharp edges remain stable during fast motion. Colour balance is fine, but vivid hues could be bolder, as could contrast: the darker scenes in *The Hills Have Eyes* deserve better insight.

It's not perfect, but if sheer portability is a priority, this Panasonic could be the best player to pack this summer.

FOR
Excellent battery life; compatibility with dual-layer discs; sharp, stable image; loads of extras

AGAINST
Balance of colours could be better; no supplied headphones; only has a composite out

VERDICT
The flight-friendly battery life plus good performance makes this Panasonic a versatile travel companion



A six-hour battery life and travel-friendly extras boost the 'LX97

Toshiba SD-P2800

★★★★★ £300

WE'RE HAPPY TO report that this portable DVD player from Toshiba carries on its predecessor's fine work. It's another five-star review, after the impressive '2700 we saw back in January. So why get this new model?

Well, there's much improved compatibility; this Toshiba will now play all DVD formats, apart from dual-layer, but including DVD-RAM, as well as supporting DivX, WMA and MP3 files. The three-in-one card-reader has become four-in-one (SD, MMC, Memory Stick, XD), while the battery life has increased from 3.5 to 4.5 hours. Should you want to hook this up at home, there's also progressive-scan capability via the component video output, as well as DTS-decoding.

Looking at things from a fresh angle

The PD2800 stands out from this crowd, too, looking smart and feeling solidly built – the trade-off being a slight bulky feel once the battery pack's attached.

The 9in screen has a much wider viewing angle than its rivals, thanks to a design that uses a different arrangement of liquid crystals from regular LCDs. The picture is smooth, with full-bodied and vibrant – though realistic – colours, sharp edges, good detail and above-average contrast.

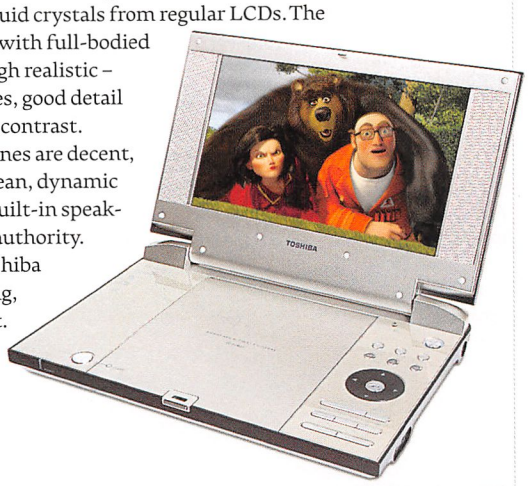
The freebie 'phones are decent, too, delivering a clean, dynamic sound, while the built-in speakers have plenty of authority.

All told, this Toshiba is a fine-performing, well-specified unit.

FOR
Wide viewing angle; stable, vivid picture; clean and clear sound; useful extra features

AGAINST
A little bulky when the battery pack's attached

VERDICT
Testament to how far portable DVD players have come – this Tosh offers superb all-round performance



A much wider viewing angle is just one Tosh plus

DLP PROJECTOR
Projection Design
Model Three 1080
£15,000

STEREO SPEAKERS
JAS Audio Orior
£2300 Page 78

STEREO DAC &
PRE/POWER AMPLIFIERS
Bryston BP26DA/2B SST
£3600/£1950 Page 79

Temptations

THE WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE KIT

Dynamite display does the double

Two-million-plus pixels of HD picture, two lamps, two colour wheels: **Projection Design's Model Three 1080** uses a new formula to rival the three-chip-DLP dominance of high-end home cinema projectors

DLP PROJECTOR
PROJECTION DESIGN MODEL THREE 1080
★★★★★
£ 15,000

FOR
Sensational image quality from DVDs and High Def; flexible

AGAINST
Not cheap

VERDICT
Complex, but deeply impressive; if you've the space and the budget, it's a must-see projector

ANTICIPATION CAN BE a cruel temptress for the hapless reviewer. All too often, we get excited by potent paper specifications, only for the promised fireworks to translate into a damp squib of disappointment.

Not so here. We've been dying to try out the new Projection Design Model Three 1080, part of the Action! range, for ages – and now we can report that the real-world experience is just as wondrous as the promise. This is a stupendous home cinema projector – and we really don't want to give it back.

Bigger, brighter and just plain sharper

Although we've seen sexier projectors, the Model Three 1080's true beauty lies beneath the surface. Technically, there's nothing else quite like it on the market, which is just as well given its price.

First off, this is the first projector we've tested to use Texas Instruments' new 1920 x 1080 DLP (Digital Light Processing) chipset, giving the potential for over two million pixels of definition (see p6 for more on 1080p). It teams this potent 'brain' with an equally powerful controller, Pixel Magic's Crystalio II video processor (pictured below). Able to take any incoming video signal and scale it up to 1080p quality, this image-enhancer uses Gennum VXP (Visual Excellence Processing) video-scaling to make seamless, noise-free motion.

However, the most unusual feature about the '1080 is its lamp arrangement: it uses two lamps, teamed with two seven-segment colour wheels and two light formatters, where most rivals use just one. This unusual, and immensely complex, 'DuArch' arrangement is intended to give more

> "The Projection Design's blend of rich, beautifully saturated colours and detail takes the breath away"

light output and, with it, both better brightness and contrast compared to a single-lamp projector.

Does it work? Oh, yes! The Projection Design's blend of rich, beautifully saturated colours and awesome low-light detail takes the breath away. The picture looks simply sumptuous, as rich and lustrous as film, especially with true 1080-line High Definition. This is definitely a case of *do* believe the hype. Would that we had the money...

The processor can route audio signals as well as video ones

TECH SPECS

PROJECTION DESIGN MODEL THREE 1080
TYPE 16:9 DLP, 1920 x 1080 resolution **CLAIMED CONTRAST RATIO** 7500:1 **THROW RATIO** Lens dependent: standard-fit, 1.6 – 2.3:1 **INPUTS** 4 x HDMI, 4 x component, 2 x S-Video, 2 x SDI, 3 x coaxial digital, optical digital, 3 x analogue audio **OUTPUTS** 2 x HDMI, component

The mammoth Model Three 1080 upgrades any signal into higher-quality 1080p images

projectiondesign
33.2 - 49.1 mm
POWERED OPTICS AND LENS SHIFT
LENS RELEASE
PUSH AND HOLD

Treat your ears to some Oriors

With their distinctive looks and demanding positioning, **JAS Audio**'s new **Oriors** might seem just too quirky to tempt, but ignore them and you'll miss out on an astonishingly detailed, open and smooth sound

STEREO SPEAKERS
JAS AUDIO
ORIOR
★★★★½
£ 2300

FOR
Higher frequencies sound incredibly clear and articulate; fast delivery

AGAINST
Lower end a tad slow and mid lacks some sonic richness

VERDICT
Well worth a listen, these quirky lookers offer some seriously impressive talents

BEAUTY IS IN the eye of the beholder, as Plato is often misquoted as saying, so you decide whether or not these are beautiful speakers. To some reviewers JAS Audio's standmounts ooze class, visually justifying their considerable price tag. Others, however, felt the Oriors looked a little ostentatious, trying too hard to look like £2K+ speakers.

Regardless, the finish should impress, and these variably angular loudspeakers certainly stand out from the predictably right-angled crowd.

Mere two-way standmounts the Oriors might be, but the cabinets reach back a chunky 36cm, so they're best used in a room where you can give them space to breath. Speaker stands should also be selected with care: sit the Oriors on lightweight supports and you forgo a chunk of mid- to lower-frequency presence, while overly heavy stands can cause the speakers to sound a little leaden-footed. Something in between – such as Partington's £399 Heavi's – will deliver optimum performance.

> "Compared to some flabby floorstanding rivals, these JAS Oriors are the sonic equivalent of opening a window in a stuffy room"

It's important where *you* sit, too: keep the Orior tweeter at ear-level, otherwise you lose an important section of the presentation.

Ribbon tweeter adds detail

Before we discuss overall sound, let's just cover that aforementioned tweeter. Even those new to hi-fi may spot something rare going on upstairs – yes, that's a ribbon tweeter on duty. Perhaps even more scarce, though, is the style of mid/bass driver on show: the Orior uses a 7in ceramic unit. The maker claims this arrangement offers impressive detail and agile bass.

Let's start with the claim we agree with. The Oriors offer outstanding levels of upper frequency info. The tweeters deliver gorgeous, smooth treble, and details such as a drummer hitting a cymbal sound remarkably realistic. You don't just get the single splash of a cymbal, but the beginning, middle and end of its sound – incredibly tricky to successfully reproduce.

Delivery is also wonderfully open: compared to some flabby floorstanding rivals, these Oriors are the sonic equivalent of opening a window in a stuffy room. Spin Kate Bush's *Aerial* and they deftly pick out the birdsong, creating a detailed yet spacious soundstage.

This skill reaches down to the midrange, where voices sound detailed and believable, but – and this is where we disagree with JAS – doesn't quite convince in the lower frequencies.

The Oriors offer a choice of Dynamic or Reference presentation settings, via a key switch. Dynamic sounds punchier, but even then bass notes can lack drive and definition. This has the unwanted effect of slowing up otherwise fleet-footed presentation. We're also a little disappointed with the slightly restrained dynamics, which can make the Oriors sound less interesting than some leading rivals.

Nevertheless these speakers work so incredibly well in some vital areas, namely detail resolution and higher frequency definition, we feel they deserve a vociferous round of applause. Are they beautiful, too? You decide.

TECH SPECS

TYPE Two-way standmount speaker
DRIVE UNITS 125mm twin ribbon tweeter, 18cm ceramic midrange/bass
FREQUENCY RESPONSE 29Hz – 60kHz
CROSSOVER FREQUENCY 2200Hz
SENSITIVITY 88dB
IMPEDANCE 8 ohm
NOMINAL POWER 130w
BIWIRABLE No
DIMENSIONS (HWD) 40 x 25 x 36cm
WEIGHT 14kg

Beautiful speakers or 1970s bathroom fixture? The Oriors' looks divide opinion

Bring out the Bryston

Here's a no-nonsense **pre/power amp** combo that won't leave you in a pickle

BRYSTON EQUIPMENT RARELY impresses for styling or finish, and this combo is no different. The BP26 DA/2B SST pre/power looks for all the world like lab equipment that's escaped into the wider world, though the 20-year warranty reminds us how solid it actually is.

In basic form, the BP26 preamp (£2600) has an outboard power supply and is line-level-only, coming with a generous provision of balanced and unbalanced connections. You can also add a phono stage (MM £400/MC £900) or even a digital-to-analogue converter (£1000), so this is a flexible unit.

The 2B SST power amp can accept both balanced and unbalanced inputs,

> "These sound astonishingly good, combining refinement and transparency like few can"

and be converted from 100w per channel stereo to bridged 350w mono.

Features aside, these Brystons sound astonishingly good, combining refinement with transparency and punch in a way that eludes all but the very best.

Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* is delivered with immense scale and dynamic reach, with each instrumental strand easy to follow no matter how complex the piece gets. In addition, there's a lovely openness to the presentation that makes the speakers, like our ATC SCM 50s, disappear. Move to the White Stripes, and the Brystons deliver rock solid bass, crisp timing and a truckful of detail.

Flaws? Sonically, there are *none*! Only the extra cash for the DAC is debatable, if you already own a quality CD player. Otherwise, this is a must-hear package.

DAC/PREAMP/POWER AMP
BRYSTON
BP26DA/2B SST
★★★★★
£ 3600/1950

FOR

This kit combines transparency with insight and punch better than anything else we've heard at this price; sturdy build; flexibility

AGAINST

Plain appearance; the DAC option is not exactly cheap

VERDICT

If sound quality is paramount, this Bryston combination is a must-listen: it's a great all-rounder, and even better value if you buy the non-DAC version of the preamplfier

Three boxes: the preamp on top; then the power supply for the preamp; finally, the power amplifier

TVs & Projectors

Seven pages of expert advice from the best team in the business. Whatever your home cinema or music system query, we're here with the answers

Q&A High def from non-HD-Ready TVs; the LCD vs plasma debate rages on; High Def without Sky; HDMI-switching boxes...

LCD versus plasma again

SYSTEM Panasonic 32in CRT, Yamaha RXV1000D AV amp, LG DVD player, surround speaker package.

PROBLEM I have £2000 to spend on a new TV. Should I buy an LCD or a plasma? I was looking at Panasonic's TH42PX60 42in plasma and the JVC LT-40DS7 40in LCD.

SOLUTION Ah, the perennial LCD versus plasma argument. It rages ever onwards, not least because the two technologies are continually evolving and improving.Currently,

we find LCDs *tend* to be superior below 32in, while plasmas typically still rule the roost above this size. Traditional differences – such as plasmas having deeper blacks and better viewing angles, with LCDs consuming less power and having longer lifespans – are becoming less distinct on the best sets. The basic rule is to choose the right screen size for your room, then the best TV, regardless of technology.

At the size you're looking at we'd go for the Pioneer PDP436XDE plasma (below), but if at £2800 that's too pricey, how about the Sony KDL-V40A12U (an LCD) at £2400? We've found both cheaper than that if you shop around.

High def without Sky

PROBLEM Having read your 'High-Def TV is here' issue, I was dismayed to read that it involved getting a Sky box! Are there any other ways to receive high definition television?

SOLUTION If you want to receive high def broadcasts, there are a few companies – apart from Sky – offering high def. You'll still need a subscription and an HD set-top box, mind, but you'll get signal via cable instead of satellite. Telewest is the leader in this market, and was in fact the first to launch HD boxes in the UK. How does it compare to Sky?

Well, it offers its 'Teleport' HD video-on-demand service, which allows you to watch high-def programmes whenever you want. It also has a digibox with a built-in 160GB hard disk, the TVDrive (pictured left). Sky's digibox has a PVR, too, but doesn't have VoD. Find out more at *www.telewest.co.uk*. For more about the realities of living with HD, check out our feature on p58.

Two HDMI sources, one input

PROBLEM My 42in plasma has one HDMI input, but I want to pump Sky HD and my HDMI-equipped DVD player into it. Am I better off using an HDMI switch box, or manually switching the connections?

SOLUTION We've tested a few HDMI switches this year, and have been impressed with the results. True, you'll get better quality if you switch the cables manually, but the improvement isn't worth the hassle.

Now, these switch boxes aren't cheap. For example, Pure Link's HDMI switch (£240, January 2006) comes highly recommended. And we also found QED's four-way switching box offered very impressive performance for around the same amount of money (£250, tested in our sister mag, the *Ultimate Guide to HD*, Spring 2006).

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE
For TV & projector queries email
tvanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

PLAYLIST

Want to test your display's picture quality? Invest in these great discs

THE NEW WORLD

Terrence Malick's twist on the classic *Pocahontas* tale is a thing of genuine beauty. Shot with a reverential regard for composition, every frame will test your display to the maximum. The musical surround score is a feat almost as remarkable.

MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter 6 – As Captain John Smith is brought to be tried, the shadowy lighting is a great tester for your display's contrast.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK

This is a cerebral biopic of Edward R Morrow, CBS reporter and contributor to the collapse of Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist terror in 1950s America. The black and white transfer is a stern tester.
VISION 1.85:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby 5.1, DTS 5.1
★★★★★

THE LONG WEEKEND

Older readers with fond memories of *Porky's* will be amused to learn that, years on, Hollywood is still making the same movie. Strictly one for young men, we reckon. Still, the crisp DVD transfer looks great.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★½☆

TWO FOR THE MONEY

This sturdy, unassuming thriller is a great all-round test DVD. Pacino and McConaughey test sound with barely audible muttering, while the high quality, low-noise transfer will tax your display.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

THE WEATHER MAN

This wonderfully eccentric movie teases a career-best performance out of Nicolas Cage, making him at once dislikeable and hugely appealing. A pristine, near-noise-free transfer makes for an impressive test DVD.
VISION 1.85:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★½

Not HD-Ready but can it show High Def?

PROBLEM My Hitachi plasma has sufficient resolution – 1024 x 1024 – to display high def, but it doesn't have a DVI or HDMI input. Sky's new digiboxes will send HD via component video, so will my screen be able to show high def?

SOLUTION We're sure that your TV isn't officially HD-Ready – it needs a digital video input for that – but you're right to say that, initially, Sky plans to send HD signals via component , which your TV does have. So, for a while you'll be able to watch in high def. However, after a period all signals will be sent solely via digital video. So, there's no guarantee your screen's current connections will be able to receive high definition signals indefinitely.

There is, however, a solution: the PureLink DC-DA1 (£225) is a DVI-to VGA converter. So, if you have a digibox with an HDMI out (as Sky's does), you can convert that to DVI (using an HDMI-to-DVI converter cable), and then use the PureLink to feed this into your TV's PC input. It's a rather convoluted solution, and not cheap, but it should keep you in high-def pictures. We can't guaranteee the quality, mind, and always recommend buying an HD-Ready TV.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY AN... LCD TV

HOW DOES AN LCD TELEVISION WORK?

Electric current is fired through individual liquid crystals, sandwiched between two glass plates. The crystals determine how much light they allow through, to produce an image. This is a 'transmissive' light process, unlike 'emissive' plasma TVs.

WHAT WILL I LOVE?

LCD TVs come in screen sizes to suit any room. The top sets, like the 32in Philips 32PF9830 (right), look gorgeous, and can be hung on a wall. Most importantly though, picture quality has improved dramatically in recent times, with LCD TVs giving plasmas a real run for their money.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR?

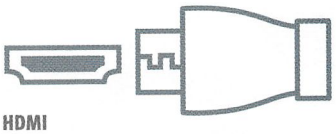
Choose your TV carefully. If you want to enjoy High-Def TV you'll need a set that boasts a digital video input, either HDMI or DVI, and a screen resolution with a minimum of 720 horizontal lines. So in a figure of 1366 x 768, the latter figure is the crucial one – in this case, the resolution is HD-Ready.

HOW MUCH DO I HAVE TO PAY?

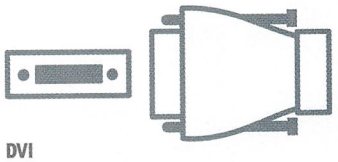
As the technology becomes more readily available, prices start to fall. A 15in kitchen set can cost under £200, but expect to pay from £850 for a great 32in set, and twice as much again for larger, 40in+ LCD TVs.

KNOW HOW Analogue and digital video cable types

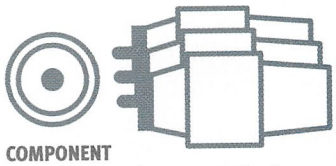
Reading down the page, we start with the best...



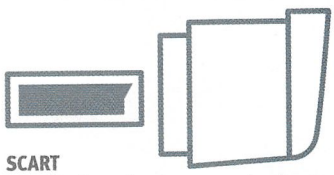
HDMI
HDMI accepts high-quality digital video and audio signals for a source with a suitable output. Part of the HD-ready spec.



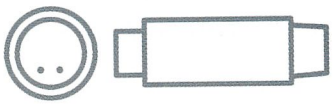
DVI
Similar to the above (HDMI-DVI adapters exist), except DVI is video only. Also part of the High-Definition TV specification.



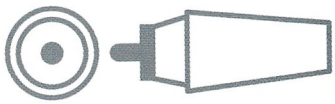
COMPONENT
The premium analogue connection for sources, though it doesn't carry sound.



SCART
Capable of carrying stereo sound and up to RGB-quality video signals in one cable.



S-VIDEO
Lesser quality, but still used for some VCRs, set-top boxes, and also games consoles.



COMPOSITE
The standard type of cable that's used to carry low-quality video. Avoid if possible.

ALSO ADD THESE

MAINS CABLE
Get a cleaner signal to your TV screen with a mains-lead upgrade. It's not black magic, they really do work. Cost from £45.

PHONO (RCA)
If you choose to connect your source using a video-only connection – such as DVI, component, or certain Scart leads – you'll also need a separate connection for the sound. Connect a pair of phono cables from your source to your television or home cinema amp's phono inputs for the audio.

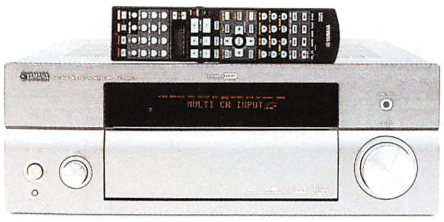
Q&A The best place for bipoles; right choice of player and amp; DVD recorder with Freeview; musical Arcam receivers

Mission to improve surround

SYSTEM Marantz SR4300 AV receiver; Sony DVP900V DVD player; Mission M32i/M3c/M3ds speakers; B&W ASW600 subwoofer; Sony FQ TV; Atacama stands; QED/van den Hul interconnects and speaker cable

PROBLEM My front three speakers are doing an excellent job – they blend perfectly. The rears, though, seem to separate themselves from the others – gunfire and explosions sound particularly removed. I'm sure the system is set up correctly, as I've measured distances and levels very carefully. I'm out of ideas!

SOLUTION The Mission M3ds (below) rear speakers you're using are, as you probably know, a bipole design. This means they have drivers firing in different directions in phase (at the same time), which means they



can create an agreeably enveloping 'soundfield', which arrives at your ears from multiple directions.

However, this can mean sounds aren't rigorously focused like they are from the front speakers. You'll often find that bipoles use smaller mid/bass drive units than their standard stereo siblings, which can influence their tonality. Most listeners aren't overly sensitive to it – but you seem to be, so our suggestion is to replace your M3ds rears with a pair of traditional, forward-firing speakers, such as M32is. These should make your rear effects more focused.

Multichannel manoevres

SYSTEM Pioneer PDP-436XDE, B&W speakers AS1/VM1

PROBLEM I'm looking to get a new DVD player and AV amplifier for my system. I was set on the Yamaha RX-V2600 amp and the Pioneer DV-989AVi player, but have been advised by my local dealer to consider the Arcam amp and DVD combination. I have £2000 to spend.

SOLUTION Recommending kit for you personally isn't that easy, as you haven't told us exactly what your priorities are. All the kit you have mentioned is top drawer, so personal preference will play a big part in deciding which combination you should go for: each pairing has considerable strengths.

Arcam receivers are known for being as good with music as they are with movies, so if music performance is important to you, consider the £1000 Arcam AVR250 coupled with the £1000 DV79, a DVD player that plays CDs in a manner far superior to most DVD players. The £700 DV78 lacks the DV79's HDMI output and DVD-Audio ability, but is equally capable in other areas.

However, if it's all-round talent per pound you're after, then the Yamaha takes it. It boasts bags of detail, huge dynamics and steers effects superbly. For movies, it's the king, and is adept with music, too.

No need to keep it familial

SYSTEM Pioneer PDP-436SXE plasma TV, Denon DVD-1920 DVD player, Mission m30 speakers

PROBLEM I'm after a multichannel amp, and reckon either of Denon's AVR-2807 and Yamaha's RX-V2600 will work. Can you offer any guidance?

SOLUTION In purely sonic terms, we'd go for the Yamaha every time. However, it's a bit potent for use with your speakers: you could save yourself a few quid and opt for the notably more affordable, and every bit as impressive, Yamaha DSP-AX757SE. Put the cash you'll save into a year's subscription to HDTV: it'll make a world of difference to your plasma TV.

PLAYLIST

The new movies that will showcase your surround sound system

MUNICH

This polished thriller is Spielberg's most restrained of recent years. Your centre channel needs excellent clarity to cope with the dense Israeli and South African accents.

MOST TESTING SCENE
Chapter 3 – As the Palestinian terrorists creep into the Olympic complex, the complex soundfield and hoarse, whispered dialogue generates almost palpable tension.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★★

FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

A remake of a 1977comedy, this slight successor dispenses with the charm of the original in favour of high-budget stuff. It boasts a suitably expensive score, which sounds great on an appropriately musical system.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★☆☆

THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Another remake, this time of a 1977 Wes Craven chiller, this tale of psychotic mutant stalkers with a fondness for evisceration isn't for everyone, but it does test your system's dynamics. You *will* be hiding behind the sofa!
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★☆

LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

Hollywood does *Snatch*, and tries to revisit *The Usual Suspects* along the way. Most of it doesn't work, but the fab cast and inventive pacing help gloss over the holes. Listen for the midrange punch when Josh Hartnett gets, er, punched.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★★

RUNNING SCARED

A taut thriller featuring Paul *Fast and Furious* Walker in a career-best role, as a small-time hood, up to his neck in it with the Mafia, Russians, and crooked cops. Dramatic camera pans make for some equally radical surround steering effects.
VISION 2.35:1 Anamorphic
SOUND Dolby Digital 5.1
★★★★★

WE'RE HERE TO HELP
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision
Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE
For home cinema queries email
cinemaanswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

Which **Arcam receiver** is the most musical?

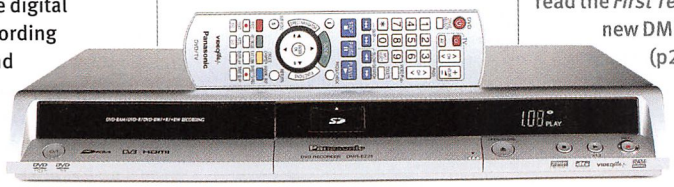
SYSTEM Marantz SR4300 multichannel receiver, Marantz DV6400 DVD player, Marantz CD5400 CD player, Marantz PM7200 stereo amplifier, Epos ELS3 5.1 speaker package

PROBLEM I currently use the two-channel amplifier to drive my front loudspeakers, and the multichannel receiver to power the rest. I've been doing this because music is my main priority. However, in the interests of tidiness, I'd like to rationalise my system, and have been considering the AVR250 and AVR300 from Arcam. Which is the more potent musical performer here, do you reckon?

SOLUTION You're certainly right to put Arcam at the top of your list: the Cambridge firm has gone to great lengths to ensure its receivers are the among the most musical multichannel devices around. Of course, you'll have seen this issue's *First Test* of the new £1500 Arcam AVR350 (p22). This latest model includes HDMI-switching, along with worthwhile tweaks in stereo performance. It's pricier than the AVR300, but its launch might also help you find a deal on the older machine. The baby of the family, the AVR250, is no slouch, but its big brothers sound better.

Record *and* watch Freeview

PROBLEM I've just purchased a Samsung LE32R41BDX HD-Ready LCD TV with built-in Freeview tuner. Now I fancy a DVD recorder that'll allow me to watch one digital programme while recording another – I understand the Panasonic DMR-ES20D fits the bill. What do you think, and is it easy to use?



SOLUTION Thanks to your Samsung's digital tuner, you should have no problem watching one broadcast (via the Samsung's tuner) while you record another (via your DVD recorder's). You're right to investigate Panasonic recorders, as they've to be proved consistently competitive recently, as well as easy to operate. You might already have read the *First Test* of Panasonic's new DMR-ES25 DVD recorder (p22) – this machine has an HDMI output, so pictures to your Samsung should be very impressive.

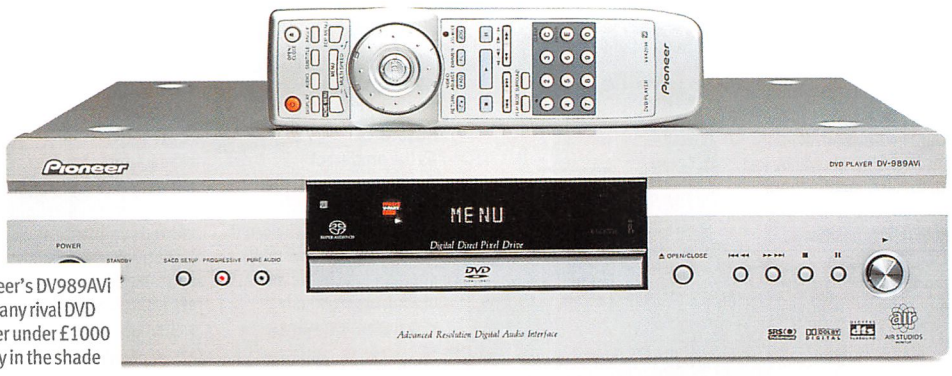
IF YOU WANT TO BUY A... DVD PLAYER

IS IT WORTH UPGRADING MY DVD PLAYER?
Yes, particularly if you're using a modern LCD or plasma TV that has either an HDMI or a DVI digital video input. A player like the Pioneer DV989AVi (below) might cost £850, but the quality of its DVD pictures will have you appreciating a truly cinematic picture experience.

WHAT ELSE CAN A MORE MODERN MACHINE OFFER?
Better performance for less money than you paid last time. HDMI and DVI outputs are now available in players costing £150 or less, while progressive scan is now almost standard, even in ultra-cheap kit. Multichannel music replay (DVD-A and SACD) is often fitted, too.

WHAT IF I JUST WANT TO WATCH FILMS ON MY OLD TV?
Prices in our *Buyer's Guide* start at £40 – the price of a couple of the latest DVD releases. Any inexpensive DVD player will connect to a TV new enough to have more than just an RF aerial input, and Toshiba's £80 SD-360E (p11) delivers pictures of great quality and detail for the cash.

SO HOW MUCH CAN I SPEND?
As we said, as little as £80 buys a decent basic player, but it's important to budget for your player in the context of the rest of your kit. If you're lucky enough to own a gorgeous 50in plasma, a fire-breathing receiver and a room full of blisteringly potent speakers, they deserve something like the £3350 Meridian G98.

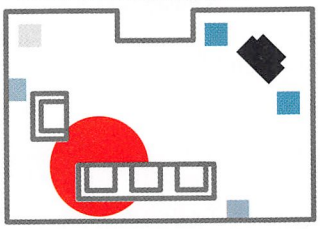


Pioneer's DV989AVi puts any rival DVD player under £1000 firmly in the shade

KNOW HOW Positioning

Where to put your surround speakers for the very best sound in your room

TYPICAL RECTANGULAR ROOM



OK, so not everyone lives in a home like this, but this is a good 'general' layout for guidance. And since most of you have your telly in the corner of the room, that's what we've shown here

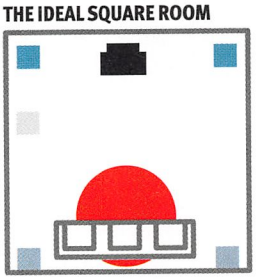
■ TELEVISION AND CENTRE SPEAKER
Ensure the screen doesn't face any windows or lights to minimise reflections. Ideally place the speaker under the TV, but if it must be on top, secure it with Blu-Tac to the cabinet

■ FRONT SPEAKERS
Keep your front speakers equidistant from the TV angled towards the sofa

■ REAR SPEAKERS
Tricky this, as the sofa is against a wall. Place one speaker either side of the seating to create an arc

■ SUBWOOFER
Bass is largely non-directional, so you can hide your sub out of sight in a corner if you like

THE IDEAL SQUARE ROOM



Granted, this is more of an 'ideal' scenario, but it does allow you to go for a near perfect set-up. Move the sofa further into the room for even better surround effects (so long as you don't get too close to the screen!)

■ TELEVISION AND CENTRE SPEAKER
See the comments made above

■ FRONT SPEAKERS
Try to create a 'star' shape for your main speakers. Give them a decent width from your seat, and then angle them towards you

■ REAR SPEAKERS
Do the same with your rear speakers. More angle gives a more direct sound

■ SUBWOOFER
A side-wall position will help to integrate your soundfield better

Q&A Lick your Linn into shape; Solo deserves quality speakers; vinyl upgrade and new amp; class CD system sought

Nice Naim pairing

SYSTEM Linn Axis/Akito/K9 record player, Marantz CD52 MkII, Arcam Alpha 3 amplifier, Royd Eden loudspeakers

PROBLEM I've had this system for 14 years, and now feel the need for an upgrade. I've got a budget of £1500, but it might stretch to £1800 if I don't tell the wife. I'm not sure where to start, what to keep, or what to change. I still listen to records, and am not sure if the deck needs replacing or not. What do you suggest for a significant improvement?

SOLUTION You've got a decent budget and we see no reason why you can't end up with a fine system. Your turntable might be old, but it's a good one. Take it to a dealer for a service and make sure the cartridge is checked too. If it's worn, either replace the stylus or swap it for the likes of Roksan's sub-£200 Corus Black. Your CD player and amp have a warmish balance so most modern alternatives will sound bright and lean in comparison, particularly when used with the Eden speakers. Assuming you don't mind keeping the Edens, go for Naim's entry-level combo of £825 CD5i and £700 Nait 5i. They'll have the right punch, speed and weight to impress. You'll also need a phono stage with the 5i amp, because it's a line-level only device: Graham Slee's £85 Gram Amp 1 would make a great choice.

One-box hi-fi can deliver

SYSTEM NAD 520C CD player, Marantz PM4000 integrated amp, Mission 780 speakers, QED cable and interconnects, Mission stands

PROBLEM I'm planning to buy Arcam's Solo to replace my old hi-fi, but don't know what speakers to buy. Would budget models like the Wharfedale Diamond 9.1s be okay?

SOLUTION We hope you've had lots of pleasure from this system, and for its replacement, we'd go for the likes of Epos's £350 M5s or Quad's £380 11Ls. The Arcam is a great-sounding unit, and anything less wouldn't be making the most of

it. Don't skimp on speaker cables or stands – QED's Silver Anniversary XT is a great buy at £5.50/m, as are Custom Design's £85 RS300 stands.

Vinyl and amp solutions

SYSTEM NAD C542 CD player, NAD C352 amplifier, Quad 11L speakers, Wharfedale SW150 subwoofer, Chord cables

PROBLEM I've got a budget of £1000 to make things better, and if possible would like to add a record player, because I've just inherited quite a large record collection.

SOLUTION Check out the £400 Pro-ject RPM5, a turntable that looks and sounds great. You'll need a phono stage, too: consider the Cambridge Azur 540P (£40) as a starting point and stretch to Graham Slee's Gram Amp 1 £85 if you can. If you think this is a little excessive, go for the likes of Pro-ject's £130 Debut III (above), and partner it with the Cambridge phono stage.

It's hard to know what to do with the rest of your system, because it's nicely balanced. The Quads are pretty demanding of amplifier quality, so try swapping your NAD amplifier for Roksan's Kandy MkIII L. Also, if your loudspeakers aren't on decent supports, take a long look at Partington's £130 Trophy stands: they'll make those Quad 11Ls sing.

PLAYLIST

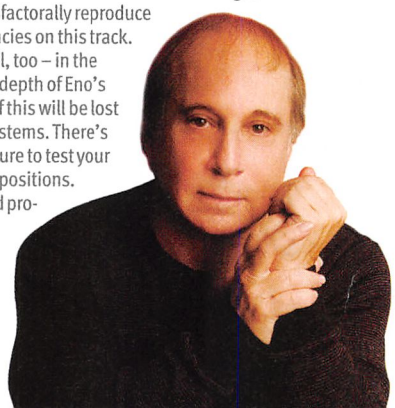
The latest music to make your system shine

PAUL SIMON
SURPRISE

Surprise indeed. Simon takes in some new influences and delivers an array of unexpected sounds. The inclusion of Brian Eno's soundscapes and Andy Smith's drum programming might distract or over-awe a less experienced artist, but here it all fits in nicely, producing a relaxed, collaborative feel. In terms of songwriting, it might not be his most classic collection, but there are plenty of trademark lyrical couplings and twists.

★★★★★

MOST TESTING TRACK
Once Upon A Time There Was An Ocean You'll need a tight bass response to satisfactorily reproduce the subtle low frequencies on this track. There's plenty of detail, too – in the percussion and in the depth of Eno's contributions. Much of this will be lost to those with lesser systems. There's also a wide stereo picture to test your speaker and listening positions. This is a great all-round production with which to maximize your set-up.



MASSIVE ATTACK
COLLECTED

All the hits from the Bristol collective on one disc. A faithful mastering job has allowed for a distinctive yet unpushy bass to test your speakers response. Don't forget to connect your sub.

★★★★★

THE RACONTEURS
BROKEN BOY SOLDIERS

More hi-fi than White or Benson's previous work, this is a playfully inventive and unexpectedly cohesive recording. Crank this right up this summer for lashings of sheer joy.

★★★★½

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN
THE SEEGER SESSIONS

As the product of three live sessions, the CD's production varies considerably. With a decent system though, that really shouldn't get in the way of what are obviously very joyous recordings.

★★★★½

ERIC WHITACRE
CLOUDBURST

Choral works constructed of beautiful harmonies. These warm recordings are only slightly marred by siblance and a lack of real low end, most noticable on the percussion of the title track. Still, well worth a listen.

★★★★½

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For hi-fi queries, email
hifianswers@haynet.com
(sorry no personal replies)

I want a **CD system** that'll set my music alight

SYSTEM Audiolab 8000CD player (original), Audiolab 8000S integrated amp (original), B&W CDM 1 speakers

PROBLEM My system is dated and after hearing some of my friend's set-ups, I think it's time for a wholesale change. I've got a budget of around £5000- £6000, and am looking for something with far greater insight and refinement. My room is 3 x 4m so I would prefer standmount speakers.

SOLUTION With your budget you shouldn't have any trouble putting together a classy system. Our first port of call would a Primare/B&W combination (pictured here). This consists of the CD31 CD player (£1500), I30 amp (£1500) and B&W's excellent 805S standmount speakers (£1600). It'll give you pretty much what you're looking for, with a huge cherry on top. For performance, build and elegance, few systems come close. Budget around £400 for a pair of substantial speaker stands – Partington's Heavis work very well – and if you don't have a decent equipment support, Clearlight's Aspekt £550 is a good choice. Don't be tempted to skimp on cables, either: we would suggest the combination of Atlas's £170 Voyager All Cu interconnect, with the same company's Hyper 3.0 loudspeaker cable, at £20 per metre.

If you're willing give up a little transparency for a punchier sound, then the Naim route would be an equally rewarding one to take. Combine the £1450 CD5x with the £1910 NAC 202/NAP 200 combo, and add something like Dynaudio's £1850 Contour S1.4 speakers, and you'll end up with a gem of a system. It's a fine alternative to the Primare set-up and, despite the higher price, well worth searching out.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY A... STEREO AMP

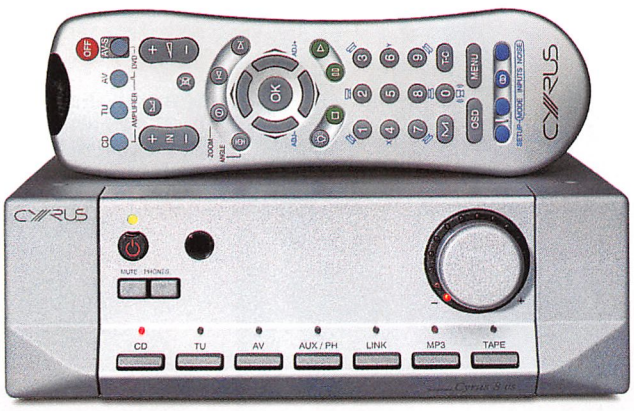
WHAT IS AN INTEGRATED STEREO AMP?
Hook up a CD player to a pair of speakers and what do you hear? Pardon? Exactly, nothing. An amplifier takes the weak audio signal from a source such as your CD player, and boosts it to a level where it's strong enough to power your loudspeakers.

BUT WHAT'S THE 'INTEGRATED' PART ALL ABOUT?
An amp is made of two parts: a preamp controls the volume and selects which source you listen to; the power amp boosts the signal. An integrated amplfier houses both sections together. Separate pre and power amps can work better but cost more.

HOW DO I TEST AN AMPLIFIER?
Hear the product, at home or in the dealer's premises, using a variety of music. Buy one you like the sound of, but don't pay for features you won't use: don't get a phono stage if you haven't got a record player. And ask if the amp is upgradeable – this might save money long-term.

WHY DOESN'T MY AMPLIFIER WORK WITH MY TURNTABLE?
A deck's cartridge emits audio signals at a very low level – much 'quieter' than, say, the signal from a CD player – and, though many older amplifiers have extra phono-specific amplification built in, many of today's machines don't – such as the Award-winning Cyrus 8vs shown on the left. You need to add what's known as a phono stage, starting at £40.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I SPEND ON AN INTEGRATED AMP?
Our *Buyer's Guide* includes amplifiers starting at £80, for an Acoustic Solutions SP101, and tops out at £9000 for a Tube Technology Synergy PPS. Match the amp with suitable partners – so if creating an amplifier, CD player and stereo speakers set-up, you should split your budget three ways.



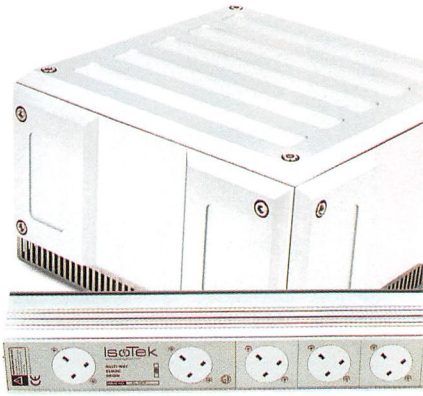
Integrated amps don't have to be big, as this Cyrus 8vs shows

KNOW HOW

Mains blocks, cable and conditioners

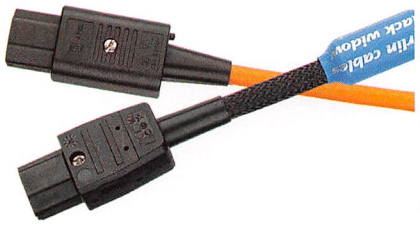
These essential extras are there to boost your system's performance

KEEP IT CLEAN
There are miles of mains cables between the power station that generates electricity and you, so it might seem unlikely that just one metre of specialist mains lead can make a difference – but it does. The quality of the free leads that come with equipment is usually so poor that good-quality plugs combined with a properly specified cable are enough to produce a more dramatically more detailed, dynamic and refined sound from your components and system.



MAINS FILTERS & CONDITIONERS
These go one step beyond cables and clean up the mains supply before it reaches your system. And guess what: your kit will sound even better: dynamics will gain expression and detail resolution improves. The trick is to filter the mains without limiting its output, and so far Isotek has impressed us most. Its Gemini Six-way (£260) is a good bet for most sub-£1500 systems, while the £1425 range-topping Titan works absolute wonders for high-end set-ups.

REPLACEMENT MAINS CABLES
We'd recommend Merlin's Tarantula (£50) for most kit, and if you're really feeling flush (ie, your system costs a couple of grand or more) van den Hul's Mainsstream (£250) will make a spectacular difference.



Sound Advice

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MP3

Q&A Open versus closed back; attaching iPod in-car; the PlaysForSure logo; an iTunes update

Have I got a bargain?

PROBLEM I bought a pair of £35 Sennheiser PX100 headphones, but have been sent the £40 PX200s instead. Which are the better pair?

SOLUTION The PX100s and PX200s cost a similar amount and look the same, but they're actually rather different. The '100s are an open-back design, and sound better – but some of that sound leaks out, possibly disturbing those around you. Fine, if you're listening in the park, but not so good if you're on a crowded bus every morning.

The PX200s are a closed-back design, which means much less sound leakage. However, we found them less comfortable and not as sweet in the treble. Choose the design that's most suitable for you.

It's in with the old

PROBLEM Which is the better-sounding iPod speaker option: a new Monitor Audio i-deck, which has had excellent reviews, or to couple an Onkyo DS-A1 dock to my old, but still quite useful, Marantz stereo PM44SE amp and Mission 761i loudspeakers?

SOLUTION The i-deck is by far the tidiest-looking of your suggested alternatives, and sounds good. However, we reckon you're better off buying the £60 Onkyo dock, and saving your remaining cash for an eventual separates upgrade.

Can you iPod my BMW?

PROBLEM I've just bought a new BMW and I want to connect my iPod nano via the car stereo's 3.5mm auxiliary input. You recommend Chord's iChord for iPod-to-hi-fi connections, but it has RCA phono plugs at one end. Can you recommend a cable with a 3.5mm plug?

SOLUTION Lucky you! Well, Chord actually makes a 3.5mm-to-3.5mm version of the iChord – it costs the same as the RCA-terminated version (£50), and we imagine it'll work perfectly for what you want to do.

PlaysForSure to be sure

PROBLEM I'm after a new MP3 player, and have noticed a few machines include a 'PlaysForSure' logo (above). What does this mean?

SOLUTION PlaysForSure helps remove some of the 'format' worries when buying an MP3 player – if you see the logo on a player, and on an online music store, then you know the tracks you download from the player will definitely work on that machine – which is not always the case nowadays.

Submitting track names iTunes

PROBLEM I make mix CDs to give out to friends – either using software or live – and am annoyed that when I break the mixes back into individual tracks, iTunes no longer recognises the names on the CD, calling them Track 1, Track 2, etc. What can I do?

SOLUTION iTunes recognises tracks by comparing data embedded in the files with a huge online database run by a company called Gracenote. When you change and chop up files, it changes the data tags, so tracks aren't recognised. However, you can resubmit the 'new' tracks, with the appropriate names.

Put your finished CD in the disc tray and fire up iTunes. In the Advanced menu, try Get CD Track Names. If it doesn't get them, manually type in the names of each song, artist, genre, and so on. In the Advanced menu again, choose Submit CD Track Names. It can take up to a day (though when we tried it, it was only an hour) for the database to update – after which, your CD is recognised by any computer that has a web connection.

IF YOU WANT TO BUY AN... iPOD DOCK

WHAT WILL I LOVE?
You'll love the superb convenience of a dock: just plug in your iPod, unplug and go. Charging and synching are easier than ever. And the newest generation of docks have loudspeakers built-in, too.

WHAT WILL I HATE?
Quality doesn't come cheap: the smaller docks don't have spectacular sound quality, while if you want a beefier sound, you could end up paying as much as for a decent micro system for the added chic.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?
Make sure your player fits in your dock. Some have a port that fits many players or have a line-in socket – however, others are iPod, nano or Shuffle-only. Also, not all docks synchronise.

CAN I TAKE IT WITH ME?
Most docks work off battery power, so you can take it down the park for picnics, or keep it in your suitcase for lonely business trips. However, there are mains-only ones, so work out which will suit you better.

RIP THESE

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS
HUMP DE BUMP
The Peppers' (below) frolicking basslines and growling vocals always test your kit. This track should speed along, full of life.
★★★★☆

SPEKTRUM
HORNY PONY
Layers of electronica and suggestive vocals making this track from the London electro-funkers a mean test of rhythms.
★★★★★

SCOTT WALKER JOLSON AND JONES
This track from Walker's *Drift* set will drag you into its nightmarish world – throw off your headphones and run for the hills!
★★★★★

ONKYO®
IMAGINATIVE SIGHT & SOUND

TX-SV919THX 1994

THX SYS-1 1995

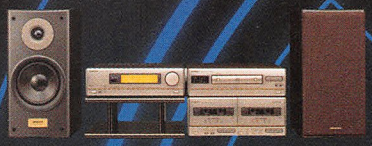
2010
2000
1990
1980

QUEST INTEGRA SERIES 1992

185 SERIES 1995

MC-2200 1968

INTEGRA 725 1970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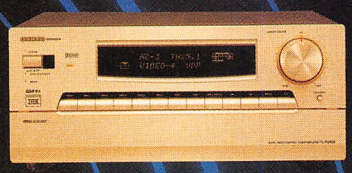
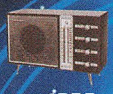

TX-DS939 1996

1970

HP-10 1957

INTEGRA A-755 1972


DS-88 1955

ST-55 1966

1960

1950

ES-65 1957

NON-PRESS CONE UNIT 1950

1946

TS-500 1974

OMF CONE 1998

LIVERPOOL COLLECTION 1988

ST-400DL 1963

EC-100 1950

MD-47 1958

DP-670 1961

CS-210 2002

GS-1 1984

MONITOR 2000 1983

M-510 1984

A-OMF CONE 2003

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Reader Rescue

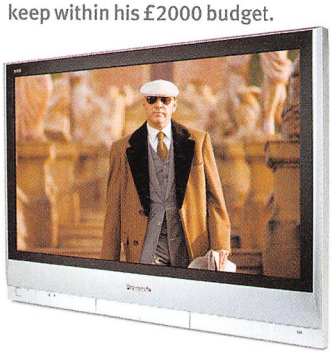
HELP! A quick hop across the border to Wales to show off some sexy new tellies in a festival of flatscreens

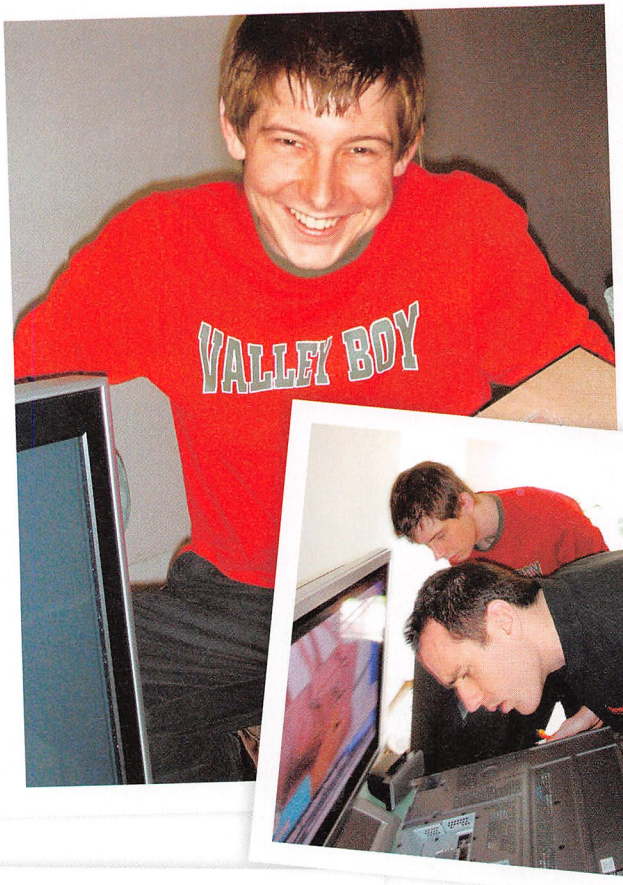
Time for some telly talk

SYSTEM 35in Toshiba plasma, Arcam AV8/P9 pre/power, Denon DVD-1920 DVD player; Mission Elegante speakers, Sky+, PS2

PROBLEM A new TV please! Rhys and housemates have a system that's not to be sniffed at sonically, but it's showing its age a touch in terms of picture. A new flatscreen is the choice, but should it be plasma or LCD, how big should it be, and which?

SOLUTION Three screens for our reader to cast his eye over: two 37-inchers – a plasma and an LCD, plus a 42in plasma to see if Rhys can just squeeze in the extra inches, and still keep within his £2000 budget.





ROONEY FLAT-FOOTED (Clockwise from top-left) (1) Rhys wears his colours on his chest (2) Joe peers knowingly at the socketry, while Rhys looks on (3) The PS2's Pro Evolution Soccer 4 is the weapon of choice for testing rapid movement on the sets (4) The winning Panasonic TH37PX60 plasma. See p38 for our full 37in *Supertest*...

DONTCHA JUST LOVE a big telly? Is there anything quite so impressive than a stonking picture on a whopping great screen? We think not!

Rhys, who lives in Cardiff and works as a cameraman, concurs. Whether he's watching Sky+, DVDs or – of considerable importance – honing his PS2 skills, he wants a full sound and vision experience.

We aim to please...

As he tells us: "I'm really happy with my speaker package, but I can't help thinking I'm not getting the best possible picture. The Tosh was great in its day, but it's getting on a bit now." We crack on with lugging in the first television.

The LG 37LC2D is a snip at just £1400 for 37in of LCD screen. A big grin breaks across Rhys's face as we haul it from its box. "It looks smart, and that's a big consideration, I'm embarrassed to say!" It's certainly easy on the eye, and if you're spending a serious wedge on a TV, we see no reason to feel coy about wanting something sleek.

We use the HDMI connection and slap in *The Matrix*, one of Rhys' favourites and a great test disc. He's impressed, but not convinced: "The colours and detail are better, but what's all that rubbish when there's movement – aargh! It's even worse when you fire up the PS2."

"Rhys marvels at the rock-solid composure and the vivid colours"

Spoiling for a fight on behalf of plasma screens everywhere is Panasonic's TH37PX60, yours for less than £1850. Rhys ponders the situation: "Pricier, but still within my budget. Is it better than the LG?"

We rub our imaginary beards in childish anticipation, such is our confidence in the Panasonic's ability.

Sure enough, Rhys is impressed. He heads straight for *Pro Evolution Soccer 4*, and marvels at the rock-solid composure with action, vivid colours, and wonderfully detailed picture. And with Sky and DVD, things are just as good: "Yup! This is the one so far, but can I go bigger?"

Think big, my friend, BIG!

That's the spirit! We instruct our lackeys to fetch the 42in Fujitsu, then realise we have no such helpers and get it ourselves. Just to rub it in, it barely fits on Rhys's AV rack. "Err... it's rather large suddenly. Those five inches make all the difference don't they? And, to be frank, it's not the easiest on the eye." So it's back in the box!

"I was getting a little giddy then. No matter, the Panasonic is superb, and the ideal size," Rhys concludes.

Another problem solved. Thank goodness we didn't mention the 50in Pioneer in the van. Phew!

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Do you have a hi-fi or home cinema headache we can soothe? We'd love to help with any sound or vision-related conundrum. Contact us at:
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Buyer's Guide

OVER 1400 REVIEWED & RATED PRODUCTS

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WITH MORE THAN 1400 test verdicts, including all the tech-specs you need to know, our *Buyer's Guide* is your passport to a new world of top-class hi-fi and home cinema kit that'll transform your music and movies.

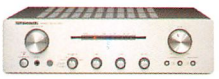
Our 29 years of testing experience – combined with unique reviewing facilities and access to the latest products first – arms you with clear, independent advice.

Our editorial staff are experts in every area of home entertainment, trained in the latest technologies and briefed on all the hot new products. Where rival magazines rely on isolated writers reviewing in a range of locations, WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION works as a team to thoroughly test kit in our dedicated review facilities. These aren't forbidding laboratories, but custom-built rooms of different sizes combining high-tech test systems with real-world fixtures and fittings like sofas and bookcases. This allows us to tell just how the review products would look and sound in your homes.

Our reviewing rooms might have soft furnishings, but we're hard on the kit we test. It's not enough for a product to perform well, it also has to offer great value for money. We conduct ruthless head-to-head tests to uncover the class-leaders in every category at every price point – as well as some great specialist options.

What can we help you buy today?

We've invested almost a million pounds in our state-of-the-art testing facilities, where our world-renowned reviewers put more kit through its paces than any other magazine. We can – and do – handle anything from the smallest MP3 player to the largest home cinema system



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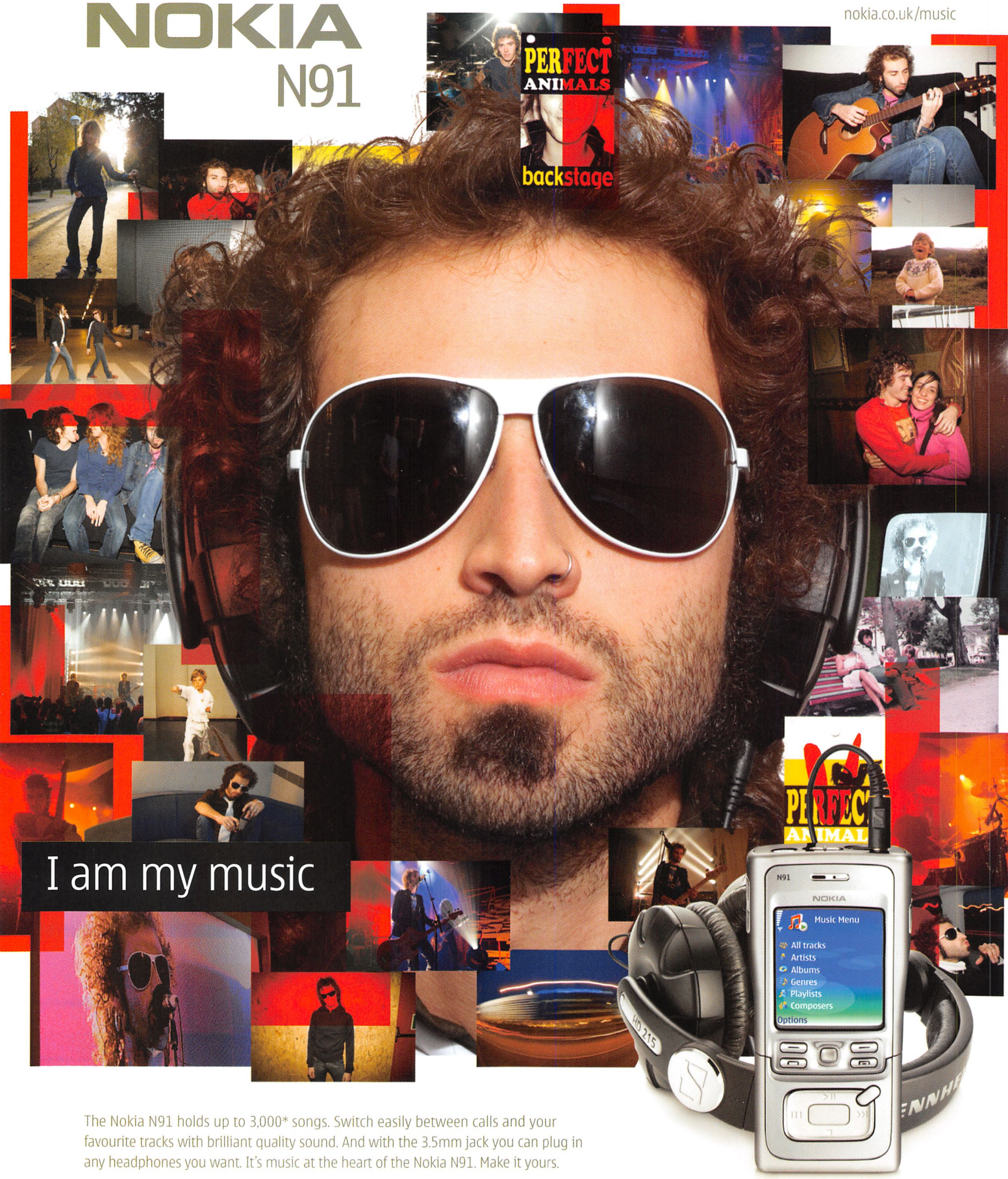

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Buy smarter, buy better

What follows is the UK's most comprehensive guide to home cinema and hi-fi, and it has just got bigger and better. Follow our step-by-step guide to help you buy the best for your cash.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

HOW WE CAN HELP

1 Section
All products of the same type are in the same place – for example, all the DVD players are in the first section. All sections list products alphabetically, with the larger sections being sub-divided by price. For example: DVD players 'under £400' are listed first, and those '£401 and over' follow aftewards.

2 Product name
This column gives you the exact name and model of products. Use it to search in the shops or online.

3 Price
This is a suggested retail price: *this is not necessarily the price you must pay*. See our shopping advice below for how to get the greatest deals.

4 Date tested
This is the date of the issue in which the product was last tested (AW indicates the annual Awards issue). FT means the product featured in our *First Tests* section. GT or ST mean it faced a selection of similar products in a comprehensive *Group Test* or an extra-large *Supertest* or *Megatest*. To get hold of the relevant back issues, call 08456 777813.

5 Verdict
We give every product a star rating, out of five. Five stars mean the product is excellent, a real class-leader; a four-star verdict means the product is very good, and is highly recommended; three stars means it's only an average product, but worth considering; two stars mean you could do better elsewhere; one-star products are best avoided.

6 We said...
A short verdict on each products, with longer summaries for Award-winners and best-in-class products.

7 Data
Our updated *Buyer's Guide* includes more essential data than ever in an easier to use format. We've included a *Glossary* on p178 to explain certain technical terms. And finally, there's a comprehensive *Directory* on p180, with every manufacturer's phone number you'll ever need.

Clare Newsome
Editor

DVD players
Digital video and audio on handy CD-sized discs

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...
BUDGET Up to £400				
Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	08.05/GT	★★★★½	Sonically impressive but you can get a much better picture.
Denon DVD-1720	130	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent picture and sound - one of the best at this price.
Denon DVD-1920	250	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	DVD player Product of the Year in Awards 2005.
Goodmans GDVD100WLCD(port)	250	UMP3.05	★★★★½	Solid player, with surprisingly good picture quality.
Harman-Kardon DV22	300	11.04/GT	★★★½☆	Great looks but it can't match the best.
Harman-Kardon DVD31	400	03.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well-made and accomplished but the price is just too high.
Limit DVD800SE	150	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Tuning by Cyrus has made this special with music.
Mustek PL8C70/PL8D70	213	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Fun for all - portable DVD player with an extra monitor.
NAD T513	170	Awd04/FT	★★★½☆	Not a bad performer but there's better value around.
NAD T533	250	11.04/GT	★★★½☆	You'll struggle to find improvements over budget models.
NAD T562	400	12.02/FT	★★★½☆	Decent player, but it doesn't offer anything special.
NAD T571(DVD/CD changer)	350	11.02/FT	★★★★½	A neat CD multiplayer and DVD player from NAD.
Nextbase SDV185SD	299	06.06/FT	★★★½☆	In-car DVD player with an 8.5in screen - there are better.
Pacific DVD 1002 Mk2	30	04.05/FT	★★★★½	Very capable for the money - ideal for a second-room.
Philips DVP9000S	400	10.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Not good enough at this price level despite its technology.
Pioneer DV-585A	130	10.05/GT	★★★½☆	Attractive only if you need a universal player.
Pioneer DV380	80	11.05/FT	★★★★½	Feels, looks and sounds like money well spent.
Samsung DVD-HD950	135	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-specified and excellent sound delivery.
Sony DVP-NS92V	200	UGSY.06	★★★½☆	Impressive picture quality but sonically it lacks dynamics.
Sony MV-700HR(portable)	340	09.05/GT	★★★½☆	Decent but it's not great value for money.
Yamaha DVD-S1500	400	12.04/FT	★★★★½	Solid performer but there are better universal players.
Yamaha DVD-S557	130	10.05/GT	★★★½☆	Decent all-rounder but doesn't have the abilities of others.
Yamaha DVD-S657	160	Awd05/FT	★★★½☆	Nothing horrendously wrong, but there are better around.
BUDGET £401 and over				
Arcam DiVA DV78	700	02.06/GT	★★★★½	Prodigious talents and the best choice for CD replay.
Arcam DiVA DV79	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £700-£1500 in Awards 2005.
Arcam FMJ DV29	1600	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery.
Denon DVD-2910	600	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £250-£750 in Awards 2004.
Denon DVD-3910	900	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Outstanding, especially paired with the AVR-3805.
Denon DVD-A1XVA	2700	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Thunderously good - sensational picture and sonics.
Lexicon RT-10	2000	01.04/GT	★★★½☆	Great picture, but ordinary sound at an extraordinary price
Linn Unidisk SC	2995	11.05/FT	★★★★½	Pair with the Chakra C1500 amp for quality multichannel.
Marantz DV7600	600	02.06/GT	★★★★½	Unusual player - great for stereo and surround music.
Marantz DV9600	1500	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Beefy specs and deeply impressive picture.
Meridian G91DAB	3895	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Not just a DVD player but a processor and tuner as well.
Meridian G98	3350	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player over £1000 in Awards 2004. Sensational.
Meridian Reference 800	10805	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Staggering player - astonishingly accomplished.
Myryad Z122	500	05.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable performer but it doesn't justifying its price.
Naim DVD5	2565	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning player - a must try for high-end system owners.
Onkyo DV-SP1000E	2800	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Amazing player - you need to see it to believe.
Pioneer DV-668AV-S	600	05.04/GT	★★★★½	Credible performer but stereo is merely adequate.
Pioneer DV-757Ai	600	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This is still one of the best universal players around.
Pioneer DV-989AVi	850	02.06/GT	★★★★★	An absolute belter - endlessly watchable pictures.
	1800	08.04/FT	★★★★½	Very good, but for this money it needs to be exceptional.

PLAYS: DVD-A, SACD, MP3, DVD+R/+RW, DVD-R/-RW, DVD-RAM, Composite out, Component out

Denon DVD-1920
Cracking value for money and a step up from the outgoing model in every department. Excellent picture performance via the HDMI output and, tha also offers superb picture quality from its component outputs. As a high universal player at a reasonable price, the DVD-1920 is very good indee

SHOP SMARTER

Five golden rules to follow before you flex your credit card...

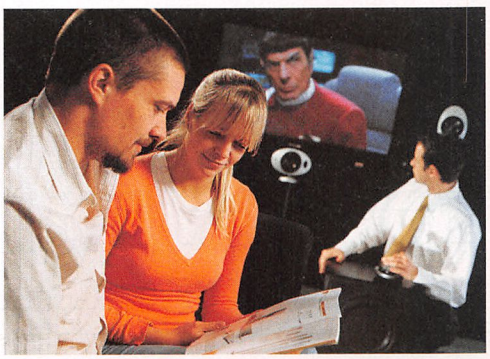
1 Get smart
Use our tests and this *Buyer's Guide* to learn about the products. It pays to be spec-savvy.

2 Insist on a demonstration
Arrange to audition any kit in a listening room or during a home trial – not on the shop floor.

3 Take along your favourite discs
Improving your system is all about you getting more from the music and movies you love, and spinning well-known CDs and DVDs will help you see and hear how systems measure up.

4 Cheap doesn't mean good value
Search around and compare prices from a range of suppliers, but always consider service and support as part of the package.

5 Take your time
Be sure you're happy with your choices. If in doubt, always ask – never rush your decision.



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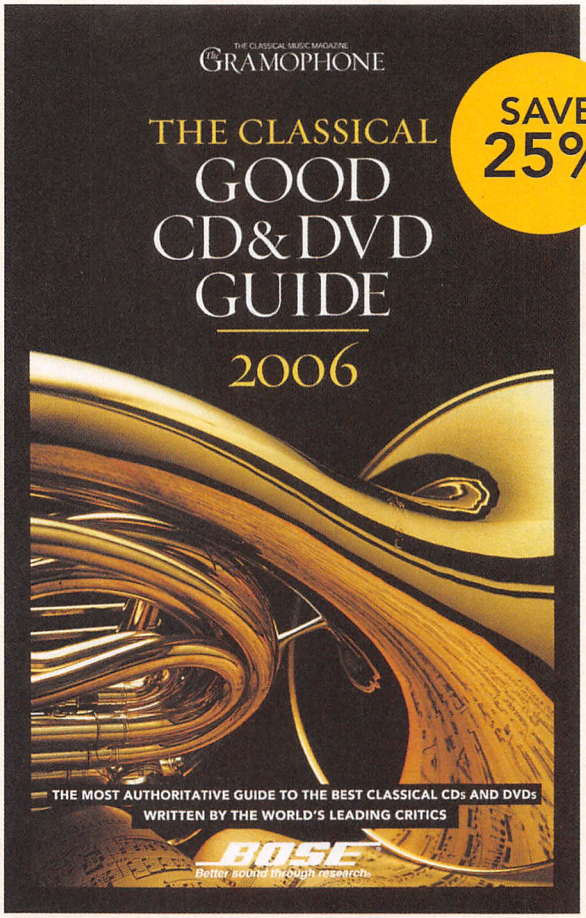

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DVD players

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BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					INPUTS & OUTPUTS												
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Phono out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out	six-channel out	Dolby decoding	DTS decoding	PAL prog scan	NTSC prog scan
Cambridge Audio Azur 540D	200	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sonically impressive but you can get a much better picture.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●		●	●
Denon DVD-1720	130	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent picture and sound - one of the best at this price.			●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-1920	250	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	DVD player Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

Denon DVD-1920

Cracking value for money and a step up from the outgoing model in every department. Excellent picture performance via the HDMI output and, thankfully also offers superb picture quality from its component outputs. As a high-quality universal player at a reasonable price, the DVD-1920 is very good indeed.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
DVD PLAYERS
DENON DVD-1920

Goodmans GDVD100WLCD(port)	250	UMP3.05	★★★★☆	Solid player, with surprisingly good picture quality.	●		●	●		●							●			●		●			
Harman-Kardon DV22	300	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks but it can't match the best.			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●						●	●
Harman-Kardon DVD31	400	03.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Well-made and accomplished but the price is just too high.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●
Limit DVD800SE	150	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Tuning by Cyrus has made this special with music.			●		●		●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●				
Mustek PL8C70/PL8D70	213	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Fun for all - portable DVD player with an extra monitor.				●	●				●					●		●					
NAD T513	170	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Not a bad performer but there's better value around.			●	●		●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
NAD T533	250	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	You'll struggle to find improvements over budget models.	●		●	●			●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
NAD T562	400	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent player, but it doesn't offer anything special.			●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●					●	●
NAD T571(DVD/CD changer)	350	11.02/FT	★★★★☆	A neat CD multiplayer and DVD player from NAD.			●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●						●
Nextbase SDV185SD	299	06.06/FT	★★★☆☆	In-car DVD player with an 8.5in screen - there are better.			●	●	●									●				●	●		
Pacific DVD 1002 Mk2	30	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very capable for the money - ideal for a second-room.			●				●		●	●			●		●						
Philips DVP9000S	400	10.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Not good enough at this price level despite its technology.		●	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●			●	●
Pioneer DV-585A	130	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Attractive only if you need a universal player.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV380	80	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Feels, looks and sounds like money well spent.			●		●			●	●	●			●		●					●	●
Samsung DVD-HD950	135	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-specified and excellent sound delivery.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony DVP-NS92V	200	UGSY.06	★★★☆☆	Impressive picture quality but sonically it lacks dynamics.		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Sony MV-700HR(portable)	340	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but it's not great value for money.			●				●							●							
Yamaha DVD-S1500	400	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer but there are better universal players.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●			●	●
Yamaha DVD-S557	130	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent all-rounder but doesn't have the abilities of others.			●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Yamaha DVD-S657	160	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Nothing horrendously wrong, but there are better around.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

BUDGET £401 and over

Arcam DiVA DV78	700	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Prodigious talents and the best choice for CD replay.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Arcam DiVA DV79	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £700-£1500 in Awards 2005.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Arcam FMJ DV29	1600	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring visuals and impressive music delivery.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-2910	600	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £250-£750 in Awards 2004.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-3910	900	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Outstanding, especially paired with the AVR-3805.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Denon DVD-A1XVA	2700	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Thunderously good - sensational picture and sonics.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lexicon RT-10	2000	01.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Great picture, but ordinary sound at an extraordinary price	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Linn Unidisk SC	2995	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pair with the Chakra C1500 amp for quality multichannel.	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●		
Marantz DV7600	600	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Unusual player - great for stereo and surround music.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Marantz DV9600	1500	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Beefy specs and deeply impressive picture.	●	●	●		●		●		●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian G91DAB	3895	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Not just a DVD player but a processor and tuner as well.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian G98	3350	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player over £1000 in Awards 2004. Sensational.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●			●		●	●	●	●	●
Meridian Reference 800	10805	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Staggering player - astonishingly accomplished.	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●
Myryad Z122	500	05.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Reasonable performer but it doesn't justifying its price.				●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●
Naim DVD5	2565	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning player - a must try for high-end system owners.	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Onkyo DV-SP1000E	2800	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Amazing player - you need to see it to believe.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-668AV-S	600	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Credible performer but stereo is merely adequate.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-757Ai	600	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This is still one of the best universal players around.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Pioneer DV-989AVi	850	02.06/GT	★★★★★	An absolute belter - endlessly watchable pictures.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●		●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Primare DVD30	1800	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good, but for this money it needs to be exceptional.	●	●	●		●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Roksan Caspian	1195	09.02/ST	★★★☆☆	CD player that spins DVDs, but there's better around.			●				●	●	●	●			●	●	●						
TEAC DV-50	4500	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. No longer the class-leader.	●	●					●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Yamaha DVD-S2500	700	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD player £300-£700 in Awards 2005. Fine picture.	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●

DVD recorders

Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS					RECORDS				INPUTS & OUTPUTS									
					DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
Alba RDVD 1000	99	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Average recordings but it is ridiculously cheap.			●	●	●		●								●	●			●	●	●
Alba RDVD 1002	80	05.06/ST	★☆☆☆☆	So bad in so many regards we can't recommend it.				●	●			●			●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●
Goodmans GDVD305DVBT	140	05.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Respectable, but others are cheaper and better.				●	●		●				●				●	●			●	●	●
Goodmans GHDD177DVDR	199	12.05/ST	★★☆☆☆	Features to entice you, but performance is poor.			●	●	●		●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●
Liteon LVW-1105HC+	90	05.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Diverting and not without charm, but the tuner is iffy.			●	●	●		●	●				●			●					●	●
Panasonic DMR-ES15	180	05.06/ST	★★★★★	Fiercely competitive recorder at a bargain price.			●	●	●		●	●	●						●	●	●			●	●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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DVD recorders continued...

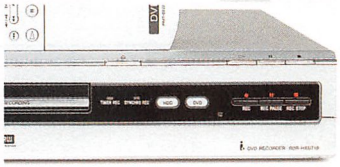
Record TV pictures digitally in superb quality

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS: DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	RECORDS: DVD+R/RW	DVD-R/RW	DVD-RAM	Hard disk	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: S-Video in	RGB Scart in	FireWire in	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	DVI-D out	HDMI out	Digital opt out	Digital coax out	FireWire out
Philips DVDR3305	150	05.06/ST	★★★★☆	No slouch - it deserves thorough investigation.				●	●		●				●	●			●	●				●	●
Pioneer DVR-230	150	05.06/ST	★★★★☆	Competitive performance, right on the money spec-wise.					●			●			●	●			●	●				●	●
Pioneer DVR-433H-S	299	12.05/ST	★★★★☆	Extremely user-friendly and good picture performance.			●		●			●	●	●	●	●			●	●			●	●	●
Samsung DVD-VR325	299	12.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Doubles as a VHS deck - let down by poor picture.			●	●	●			●	●		●	●			●	●			●	●	●
Sanyo DVRS120	130	05.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Performance is too variable to make it a contender.			●	●	●		●				●	●								●	●
Sharp DV-HR400	350	09.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad, but it's ordinary fare compared to the best.			●	●	●	●		●			●	●			●	●			●	●	●
Sony RDR-GX210	150	05.06/ST	★★★★☆	Lots to recommend - good reception and recordings.			●	●	●		●	●			●	●			●				●	●	●
Sony RDR-HX510	400	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Best DVD/HDD recorder £250-£450 in Awards 2005.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●				●	●			●	●	●

BUDGET £401 and over

Pioneer DVR-530H	500	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Easy to set-up, good DVD picture and a 160GB hard disk.			●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●			●	●			●	●	●
Pioneer DVR-920H	1300	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Feature-packed machine that is an impressive performer.			●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●			●		●	●	●	●
Sony RDR-HXD710	500	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best DVD/HDD recorder £450+ in Awards 2005.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●			●	●	●



Sony RDR-HXD710

The 710 ticks all our current boxes for DVD recorders, and then some: The built-in tuner is the match of the latest high-end screens and the hard disk in highest-quality mode is extremely faithful. Burn to a disc and the results are just as impressive. As good a reason to jump on the DVD/HDD bandwagon as we have seen.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
DVD & HARD-DISK RECORDERS
SONY RDR-HXD710

Sony RDR-HXD910	700	01.06/FT	★★★★★	Faultless recordings and brilliant HDMI performance.			●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●			●	●			●	●	●

Surround amps & receivers

Home cinema and hi-fi sound through multiple speakers

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Tuner presets	Channels/power	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Cambridge Audio Azur 540Rv2	270	06.06/FT	★★★★☆	Big, boisterous sounds and great looks.	40	7x80	●		●	●	●	●					6	7	●	●	●			●	●
Denon AVR-1706	250	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Talented, this is great value for money.	56	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●				
Denon AVR-1906	330	10.05/GT	★★★★★	Best receiver under £350 Awards 2005.	40	7x80	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	
Denon AVR-2106	450	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Impressive with movies and music.	40	7x90	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	8	●	●	●			●	
Eltax AVR800	200	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Killer specifications for the price.	20	6x92	●		●	●	●						7	1	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 130	350	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Game performer with real strengths.	30	5x40	●										8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 135	350	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Likeable - a real pleasure to listen to.		6x40	●		●	●	●	●					7	0	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR 430	800	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent but isn't not special enough.	30	7x65	●		●	●	●	●	●				3	8	●	●	●				
Marantz SR4500	350	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performer with plenty of features .	50	7x80	●	●	●		●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Onkyo TX-SR653E	500	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine-value all-rounder with a DAB tuner.	40	7x125	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	1	●	●	●			●	
Pioneer VSX-1015	500	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Only one problem - aggressive sound.	30	7x150	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		8	8	●	●	●			●	
Pioneer VSX-2014i	800	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped, impressive verve.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			4	8	●	●	●	●		●	
Pioneer VSX-915	300	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Exciting but shows a lack of subtlety.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●					6	8	●	●	●			●	
Pioneer VSX-C502	300	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Svelte looks and spacious sound.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				4	6	●	●	●				
Sony STR-DB895D	350	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good-sounding and includes DAB radio.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				5	8	●	●	●			●	

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Surround amps & receivers cont...

Home cinema and hi-fi sound through multiple speakers

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Tuner presets	Channels/power	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Yamaha DSP-AX757SE	500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Product of the year in Awards 2005.	-	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	●

Yamaha DSP-AX757SE

Sounds much more expensive than it actually is, and will simply dismiss the boundaries of your living room, transporting you to the more spacious surroundings of a real cinema. It also retains all the stereo musicality of its acclaimed forebear into the bargain. Buy one today – it's a fabulous product.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SURROUND AMPS/RECEIVERS
YAMAHA DSP-AX757SE

Yamaha RX-V100D	329	03.06/FT	★★★★☆	Capable buy, and sure to find fans.	60	6x95	●	●	●				●				5	7	●	●	●			●	
Yamaha RX-V1500	700	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Fully loaded and performs superbly.	40	7x120	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		11	8	●	●	●		●	●	
Yamaha RX-V357	169	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Top performer for the money.	40	100x5	●			●	●						6	6	●	●	●				
Yamaha RX-V457	299	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Unimpressive at this price.	8	6x85	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				6	0	●	●	●			●	
Yamaha RX-V657	470	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Class act - hits hard where it counts.	40	7x95	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●			●	

BUDGET £801 and over

Arcam DiVA AVR250	1000	06.06/GT	★★★★★	Excels in the key area: sound quality.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Arcam DiVA AVR300	1300	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Stunning with the DV79 DVD player.	25	7x100	●	●	●	●		●	●				9	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Denon AVC-AIIXV	2500	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Most of the ability of its bigger brother.	-	7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●		●	
Denon AVC-AIXV	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005.	-	10x170	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	16	22	●	●	●	●		●	
Denon AVR-3806	1000	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Features and technology excel.	56	7x120	●	●	●	●		●	●				12	8	●	●	●		●	●	
Denon AVR-4306	1500	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Accomplished and laden with features.	56	130	●	●	●	●			●				10	8	●	●	●		●	●	
Harman-Kardon AVR 630	1000	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good performer with great usability.	30	7x75	●	●	●	●							7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Harman-Kardon AVR7300	1700	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - powerful and dynamic.	30	7x110	●			●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●				
Harman-Kardon DPR2005	1300	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Slimline, classy all-digital receiver.	30	7x120	●		●	●	●	●	●				12	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Lexicon RV-8	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, flexible and very well-built.		7x140	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	8	●	●	●			●	●
Marantz SR9600	2500	03.06/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive with brilliant auto set-up.	50	7x140		●	●				●		●		10	8	●	●	●			●	●
NAD T763	900	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Enjoyable listen but not a feature king.	30	6x100	●	●	●	●	●	●					6	8	●	●	●				
NAD T773	1200	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting with music and movies.		7x110	●			●	●	●					10	8	●	●	●		●		
Onkyo TX-NR5000E	4000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Stupendous with real staying power.	40	7x200	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	10	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Onkyo TX-SR803E	850	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Consider if you like it loud with punch.	40	7x140	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●		3	8	●	●	●			●	
Parasound Halo C1 and A51	7500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Exceptional pairing - but pricey.		5x250	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Pathos Cinemax	4750	01.06/ST	★★★★★	Stunning sound with music and film.	-	5x110/2x450											7	6	●						
Pioneer VSA-AX10Ai	3000	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs astonishingly well - a fine buy.	-	7x150	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Pioneer VSX-AX4AVI	1000	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Extremely accomplished all-rounder.	30	7x130	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		8	8	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Primare SPA21	2000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best amp £1500-£2500 Awards 2005.	-	5x100	●		●	●	●	●					5	8	●	●	●				●
Rotel RSX-1056	1195	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Genuinely classy and a great listen.	30	5x75	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Rotel RSX-1067	1795	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Sublime sound but the price is high.	30	7x100	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				7	8	●	●	●			●	●
Sony STR-DA7100ES	1699	10.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Lots of features but the sound is tame.	30	7x170	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				5	2	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Yamaha DSP-Z9	3300	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Best amp over £1000 in Awards 2004.		9.1/170W	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	12	10	●	●	●	●		●	●
Yamaha RX-V2600	900	06.06/GT	★★★★★	Simply the best performer at this price.	40	7x130	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		11	8	●	●	●			●	●

Processors

Team with a power amp for a high-end multichannel solution

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS Matrix	DTS Discrete	DTS 96/24	THX	THX EX	THX Ultra2	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: External inputs	Pre-outs	Analogue in	Coax digital in	Opt digital in	FireWire in	PC in	Digital opt out	Digital coax out
Arcam AVP700	1400	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent but uninspiring with the Arcam P1000 power amp.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Krell HTS7.1	8998	01.04/FT	★★★★★	Class leader - comfortable with music and movies.	●		●	●	●	●		●	●		10	8	●	●	●				
Lexicon MC-12	8100	04.02/FT	★★★★★	On our electronic elite shortlist - it's jaw-droppingly good.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	7	●	●	●			●	●
Lexicon MC-8 (balanced)	5750	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A belter - almost as much ability as its MC-12B brother.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	6	●	●	●			●	●
Meridian 861	9833	02.00/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant, better-sounding than almost everything else.	●	●	●				●	●	●	●	12	10	●	●	●		●	●	●
Meridian G68ADV	4995	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - a very fine niche product.	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	12	8	●	●	●				●
Myryad MXD6000/MXA7150	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre appearance but a top-class performer.	●		●	●	●	●					9	8	●	●	●				
Naim AV2	2395	12.02/FT	★★★★★	AV2 and NAP V150 power amp - truly thrilling combination.	●		●	●							10	8	●	●	●			●	●
Parasound Halo C1	4500	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Strong surround abilities when paired with the A51 amp.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Parasound Halo C2	3000	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	Pricey but excellent kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	11	8	●	●	●		●	●	●
Rotel RSP-1068	995	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fistful of features and solid performance; just short of special.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	10	●	●	●		●	●	●
Rotel RSP-1098	2295	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Terrific - worthy of comparison with much pricier designs.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				8	8	●	●	●		●	●	●

Subwoofers

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	300	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Not the worst, but others give more weight and depth.	A150	22	36x38x31	●		●	●				2
ATC C-4	2350	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Rhythmic and musical, at ease with pretty much anything.	650	31	58x50x50		●		●			●	Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Subwoofers continued...

Bass reinforcement for both home cinema and hi-fi

BUDGET Up to £2095

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Audio Pro B1.36	400	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Worthy choice if you want plenty of thump from a compact box.	200	25	45x35x39	●		●	●		●	●	Bk
B&W ASW300	250	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a fair slice of low-end weight and ability for the price.	A100	20	41x33x38	●		●	●	●	●	●	2
B&W ASW675	650	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Cracking little sub that will suit more than DM600S3 owners.	500	25	34x34x41		●	●		●		●	3
B&W ASW750	1200	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in 03 Awards. Solid bass delivered with power.	A1000	30	44.40.48		●	●		●		●	5
B&W ASW825	1600	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning - weight, punch, speed and definition.	1000	30	53x53x35		●	●		●		●	3
B&W PV1	950	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer over £900 in Awards 2005. Remarkable.	500	2x20	34x29x35		●	●	●	●		●	Sl
DALI S1.5	999	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Big box with huge bass - superbly controlled, detailed and clear.	300	38	56x45x49		●	●		●		●	3
Dynaudio SUB300	900	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The level of performance fails to live up to its price tag.	200	24	34x32x47	●		●				●	4
Energy S8.3	260	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Does a decent enough job but it is not going to blow your mind.	A100	20	42x28x36	●		●	●			●	3
Epos ELS SUB	380	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Performs well with both music and movies - good price too.	300	25	37x34x45		●	●	●	●	●	●	3
Eton E300	695	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Good design - When right it's capable of power and authority.	A300	25	40x35x30		●	●	●	●	●	●	4
Jamo D7Sub	999	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Specs look good on paper but it fails to deliver in use.	400	38	49x59x44		●	●					Gr
KEF PSW 3500	599	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	By no means a bad product but it fails to offer anything special.	300	30	45x60x40		●	●		●		●	4
Linn Sizmik10.25 (each)	995	10.01/FT	★★★☆☆	A neat design but outstripped by similarly priced competitors.	500	25	39x36x36		●	●	●	●		●	4
M&K MX-350 MkII (THX)	1895	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Little short of breathtaking - partner with pedigree equipment.	A75	20	58x39x51		●	●	●			●	Bk
M&K V1250THX	895	06.99/FT	★★★★★	Part of the 750THX package - stunning home cinema performer.	125	30	46x39x58		●	●				●	Bk
Magnat Omega 300	499	12.01/ST	★★☆☆☆	Respectable performance, but disappointing lack of real depth.	A100	30	46x52x49		●	●	●	●	●	●	Bk
MJ Acoustics Pro 100 (Wd)	699	04.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb punch with excellent extension - not for small rooms.	100	2x20	37x59x31		●	●	●			●	6
MJ Acoustics Pro 50 (Paint)	299	06.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Awesome clout from a tiny enclosure.	50	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Pro-50 (Wd)	349	12.01/ST	★★★★★	Incredibly small, very fast and agile - not ideal for big rooms.	A50	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 1 MkII	799	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Attractive proposition and certainly worth an audition.	150	27	49x42x32	●		●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 100 (Paint)	350	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 03. Quality sub with a gutsy performance.	120	20	33x28x28		●	●	●			●	2
MJ Acoustics Ref 150 (Wd)	629	Awd03/GT	★★★★☆	Strong sub that works well with both movies and music.	150	25	36x30x29		●	●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 150 MkII	499	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Hits the spot for high-quality, well-defined bass and a fine finish.	150	25	30x30x35		●	●	●	●		●	6
MJ Acoustics Ref 200	650	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Capable, compact sub but there's plenty of competition.	200	25	30x30x36		●	●	●	●		●	9
MJ Acoustics Ref I MkIII	799	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Very talented - fast, punchy and well-made.	250	25	45x50x32	●		●	●	●		●	6
Monitor Audio ASW 100	300	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	A solid all-rounder that should appeal in most set-ups.	A120	25	32x32x34	●		●	●			●	2
Monitor Audio FB210	700	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Big bold sound - but it's not a sub for smaller spaces.	250	2x25	50x37x37	●		●	●			●	2
Monitor Audio RS W12	650	05.06/GT	★★★★★	Brilliant: a fine, fun sub that plays both music and movies well.	500	30	34x34x37		●	●		●		●	6

Monitor Audio RS W12

It might be small, but the RS W12 hits hard, courtesy of its stiff, heavy, sealed-box cabinet, long-throw magnesium/aluminium drive unit and spectacular power. The sound is effortless: turn up the wick, and it simply gets louder, in a linear, progressive way. We've no hesitation in giving it a big thumbs up.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	Driver (cm)	Cabinet (hwd) cm	Ported	Sealed	Line inputs	Speaker in	Line outputs	Speaker out	Phase invert	Finishes
Mordaunt-Short MS309	230	05.04/GT	★★★★★	First really cheap sub ever to impress us - bargain bass boost.	A150	25	37x37x37	●			●			●	3
Mordaunt-Short MS909W	500	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine effort that will work well in a wide range of systems.	200	30	42x42x42	●			●	●		●	2
NHT Ten	515	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	Great sub in many ways, and worthy of consideration.	150	25	44x28x38	●			●			●	1
Pioneer SW2505	600	10.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Can't match its rivals in terms of overall quality.	250	30	43x48x43		●	●				●	Bch
Quad L Subwoofer	700	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £500-£900 in Awards 2005.	300	30	53x34x47		●	●	●	●		●	4
Quad L-ite	550	05.06/GT	★★★★★	Comparatively compact, yet muscular - an excellent all-rounder.	300	25	48x29x42		●	●	●	●		●	2
REL Acoustics Q-150E MkII	500	09.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 03. Sensible but effective revamp.	150	25	32x29x33		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Q201E (Paint)	725	02.01/FT	★★★★★	Great extension and muscularity - one of the best small subs.	200	25	33x30x35		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Q400E (Paint)	1000	09.00/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Not big, but it sounds gigantic.	400	30	42x39x43		●	●	●			●	Bk
REL Acoustics Quake (Paint)	350	12.02/FT	★★★★★	REL's pocket rocket merits instant inclusion on any audition list.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Quake (Wood)	425	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Produces prodigious bass considering its diminutive stature.	100	20	29x25x27		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Stadium III	1500	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2002. Stunning performer in large rooms.	200	25	56x59x39	●		●	●			●	5
REL Acoustics Stampede (Pnt)	550	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer £300-£600 in Awards 2004.	100	20	40x28x29		●	●	●			●	2
REL Acoustics Storm 5	1000	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Seriously impressive product from Welsh wizard REL.	200	25	52x35x37		●	●	●	●		●	6
REL Acoustics Strata 5 (Wd)	800	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Combines user-friendly appeal with excellent sonic ability.	A150	250	32x46x33		●	●	●			●	6
Sunfire Corp True Subwoofer EQ	1695	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cute unit that emits bass like you wouldn't believe.	2700	2x25	28x28x28		●	●	●	●	●	●	Bk
Sunfire Corp True Sub EQ Sig	2195	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Small but madly powerful, and offers punch and weight aplenty.	2700	2x30	33x33x33		●	●	●	●		●	Bk
SVS PB10-ISD	470	02.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Worth a listen if you really want to crank the volume.	300	25	39x48x54	●		●				●	Bk
Tannoy TS-12	499	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not the last word in subs but it's mighty impressive, all the same.	500	30	37x34x34		●	●		●		●	Bk
Velodyne CHT-12R	469	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	Subwoofer Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Still outstanding.	200	30	46x38x50	●			●	●	●	●	3
Velodyne SPL-1000R	899	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Small sub with plenty of muscle - automated EQ is a clever touch.	1000	25	32x31x36		●	●	●	●		●	3
Wharfedale Diamond SW150	250	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subwoofer under £300 in Awards 2004.	A150	25	33x33x37	●			●	●	●	●	3
Wharfedale SW250	400	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Produces an explosive but controlled low-frequency hit.	250	25	42x42x38				●			●	5
Wilson Benesch Torus	3000	06.06/FT	★★★★★	The most musical and insightful deep bass we've ever heard.	200	36	30x45dia		●	●	●	●		●	2
Yamaha YST FSW100	150	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Plenty of punch and control from a small, attractive unit.	75	30	37x40x16	●			●				3
Yamaha YST-SW215	180	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	The price makes it tempting, but performance is well below par.	150	20	29x36x32	●			●	●		●	Bk
Yamaha YST-SW315	270	09.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A reasonable subwoofer, but it's not good enough to excite.	270	25	24x59x45	●			●	●		●	Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Compact speaker packages

Surround sound enjoyment from small, stylish speaker systems

BUDGET Up to £4500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aego T	800	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	The excellent satellites offer first-class sound.	100	8	86	20x12x15	20x12x15	20x12x15	36x36x36		Bk
Arcaydis AK5.1	1092	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	A sense of scale that others find hard to match.	50	90	3.9	30x16x9	30x16x9	30x16x9	39x29x33		2
Artison Sketch	700	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	Convincing three channels from two TV speakers.	n/a	89	6	custom-built					2
Atlantic Technology System 920	910	02.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Exciting listen but won't catch the competition.	100	88	8	22x15x15	22x15x15	22x15x15	33x34x31		2
Audica CS-system 1	650	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Innovative and thoughtful - a real eye-opener.	100	87	4	-	9x80x19	19x7x19	42x35x35		2
Audica CS-system 3	1100	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Handsome and aurally good-natured but it's expensive.	100	87	4	105x8x19	9x28x19	19x7x19	39x40x40		2
Audio Pro Cinema Precision	500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Decent, but the overall sound lacks excitement.	50	88	8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	21x10xx8	32x32x32		Al
B&W MT-20	975	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	100	85	8	24x11x17	24x11x17	24x11x17	33x33x39		2

B&W MT-20

Classy and competent, the latest B&W style package looks great, as you would expect. Its elegant design is solidly constructed and looks lustrous. Importantly, the MT-20 sounds great, too, revelling in opportunities to show off its detail, timing and dynamics. Overall, it's staggering value for money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
COMPACT SPEAKER PACKAGES
B&W MT-20

B&W MT-30	1575	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Best compact speaker package £1500+ Awards 2005.	100	85	4.8	24x11x17	11x24x17	24x11x17	34x29x35		3
B&W VM1/AS1	850	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent package, but newer rivals have eclipsed it.	100	91	8	52x12x9	52x12x9	52x12x9	38x25x38		3
Blue Sky Sky System 1	3524	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable - genuine rival for established brands.	A2x100	-	-	31x20x30	20x31x30	31x20x30	46x43x56		Bk
Bose Acoustimass 10 Series III	800	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fair-sounding and it's very small, sub apart.	100	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x21x64		3
Bose Acoustimass 15 Series II	1050	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	Delivers thrills without filling the room with boxes.	200	-	4	16x8x10	16x8x10	16x8x10	42x74x20		3
Cabasse XO2	750	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	This compact, elegant system is powerful and cohesive.	70	92	8	13x13x10	13x13x10	13x13x10	37 x26 x37		2
Canton CD 4.25(+CD50)	1660	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a compelling blend of looks and ability.	120	86.5	4	101x9x10	9x43x10	101x9x10	47x30x44		Al
Canton Movie CD 1	480	Awd03/FT	★★★★★	Tiny kit at a great price - outstanding option.	45	86.5	4	14x9x10	9x22x10	14x9x10	39x24x43		Al
Castle Compact CC3	1000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Happy with music and movies - will sit close to the wall.	70	86	8	20x14x16	14x32x16	20x14x16	35x35x36		11
Eclipse TD 5.1(5x307/316)	1300	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Discrete and covetable but the sound is not flawless.	70	80	8	16x12x16	16x12x16	16x12x16	35x24x30		3
Elac Cinema One 5.1	399	12.02/ST	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Highly effective.	60	84	6	12x9x10	12x9x10	12x9x10	37x28x38		2
Energy Act6	600	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Hamstrung by an irritating lack of integration.		87	8	16x17x11	16x17x11	16x17x11	41x25x35		Sl
Energy Encore	1000	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Quality kit that provides a good listen with movies.	125	89	8	19.13.19	12x40x20	19x13x19	35x35x36		Bk
Focal-JMlab 3SibXL/2Sib/Cub2	1099	02.05/FT	★★★★☆	Capable and refined package with a top class sub.	100	91	4	50x14x10	50x14x10	25x14x16	33x30x30		Bk
Infinity TSS-750	500	04.04/ST	★★★★★	Appealing package with good performance and looks.	100	88	8	15x11x11	11x24x11	15x11x11	43x27x40		2
Jamo D6PTX (5.1)	1799	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Delivers fabulous sound for a sensible price.	180	89	4	29x60x15	29x60x15	21x44x15	44x45x44		Gry
KEF KHT 2005.2	600	11.05/GT	★★★★★	A recent price cut has revived this stalwart package.	100	88	8	20x13x15	20x13x15	20x13x15	37x32x32		2
KEF KHT1005	300	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best compact speaker package under £500. Terrific.	100	86	8	17x11x8	11x18x8	17x11x8	36x32x32		Al
KEF KHT9000ACE	4200	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and capable of a surprisingly big sound.	150	88	8	56x25x13	25x56x13	56x25x13	47x50x50		Sl
KEF Q Compact AV	850	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Detailed and insightful listen, but a little lightweight.	100	89	8	27x18x25	16x43x22	27x18x25	36x50x33	●	4
M&K K-5 Package	1495	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Builds on the strengths of its Award-winning forebear.	150	-	8	19x13x15	19x13x15	19x13x15	35x26x25		2
M&K K-7 Package	1750	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fun-sounding set-up - front runner with movies.	200	90	4	33x12x15	12x33x15	33x12x15	25x35x24		Gry
M&K Xenon 25	2099	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	Forceful and weighty sound - largely effective.	200	n/a	4	16x10x15	16x10x15	16x10x17	47x39x51		4
Mirage Omnisat/OM200	1800	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Clever - an intriguing alternative to the norm.	150	89	8	20x16x20	20x16x20	20x16x20	48x42x114		4
Mission fs1-AV	500	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish NXT kit that's just right for its market.	100	88	8	32x8x4	32x8x4	32x8x4	40x49x34		Si
Mission M-Cube	1000	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines looks, discretion and excellent sound.	150	85	4	9x9x9	9x9x9	9x9x9	32x32x32		2
MJ Acoustics Pro Cin 1/Pro 50	799	02.03/ST	★★★★☆	For those who want small, conventional speakers.	100	88	8	23x16x12	23x16x12	23x16x12	33x28x28		8
Monitor Audio Radius	1050	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Capable, tiny satellites but the subwoofer is too harsh.	100	87	8	19x12x14	12x35x10	19x12x14	37x23x32		5
Mordaunt-Short Genie	800	05.05/ST	★★★★★	Compact package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	100	86	4	22x13x17	13x30x16	22x13x17	42x37x37		Sl
Mordaunt-Short Premiere Plus	500	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	As cinematic experiences go this is a class act.	80	86	4	18x11x13	11x28x13	18x11x13	37x37x37		3
Morel Nova MkII	595	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Cute, sonically capable and diverting.	100	87	6	110dia	110dia	110dia	145x510dia		3
Morel SA2/C5	1495	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Well constructed but offers more style than substance.	120	85	8	18x14x9	16x51x16	18x14x9	No		3
Pioneer SV410	399	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Ideal for home cinema fans on a tight budget.	100	85	8	105x21x21	68x37x53	105x21x21	38x30x38		Sl/Bk
Polk Audio Surroundbar	900	03.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Seven drivers and three tweeters all in a bar.	125	89	8	11x108x13(unit)	-	-	-		2
ProAc Response Hexa 5.1	2496	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best compact package over £1000 in Awards 2004	100	86	8	22x14x15	14x33x15	22x14x15	34x36x30	●	4
Quad L-ite	1000	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Impressive - traditional looking, top-performer.	120	86	6	23x14x16	14x34x16	23x14x16	49x29x43	●	4
Ruark Acoustics Vita 120	1700	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Long-running compact package - still a class act.	120	86	6	20x11x16	20x32x16	20x11x16	37x30x30	●	2
Sequence Style 20 5.1	599	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Refined to the point of boredom.	60	88	6	25x10x20	11x24x20	25x10x20	37x15x40		Al
Tannoy Arena	1199	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Blisteringly effective and fearsomely competitive.	100	88	8	19x13x18	14x25x15	19x13x18	44x35x21		4
Tannoy Arena (incl stands)	1580	09.05/GT	★★★★★	Class act - an audio and visual treat you must audition.	100	88	8	19x13x17	13x24x15	19x13x17	44x35x21		4
Triangle Galaxy 5.1	800	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	This package sounds great with both films and music.	75	90	8	20x13x12	20x13x12	20x13x12	32x32x32		Sl
Wharfedale Diamond 9 HCP	500	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Best speaker package £500-£900 in Awards 2005.	75	86	6	24x15x17	12x33x13	24x15x17	33x33x36		4
Zingali Cinema I	1400	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Look appealing but let down in the sound department.	120	89	6	88x10x15	10x46x15	25x10x15	No		6

Full-size speaker packages

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3B	950	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Best full-size package under £1000 in Awards 2004.	150	88	8	88x22x19	17x46x19	36x19x24	36x38x31	●	2
Acoustic Energy Aelite 5.1	1895	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Brilliant performers they just melt into the background.	175	89	6	23x92x30	45x18x30	19x29x23	49x37x37	●	3

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Full-size speaker packages continued...

Larger surround sound speaker systems for better-quality sound

BUDGET Up to £10000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Nominal imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Subwoofer	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Linear 5.1	1300	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Lively and entertaining, you should give it an audition.	175	89	8	90x24x27	18x62x20	36x19x26	50x43x39	●	2
ATC C1 Collection	2123	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Compact, but this set is capable of sounding huge.	300	84	8	30x16x21	16x60x21	30x16x21	44x35x35	●	3
ATC C3 Collection	5268	02.04/GT	★★★★★	First-rate solution for both music and movies.	300	86	4	33x20x26	33x20x26	33x20x26	58x50x50	●	3
ATC C5 Collection	11026	03.04/FT	★★★★☆	Great for CD and SACD/DVD-A but ruthlessly revealing	A250	-	-	47x39x40	25x65x57	47x29x40	58x50x50		Va
Audio Pro Black Diamond	1550	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Classy looking and cope well with movie soundtracks.	150	87	8	101x19x32	19x56x27	34x25x25	45x35x39	●	1
Audio Pro Bravo FX	1850	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Not without flaws, but well worth auditioning.	125	87	4	29x19x26	19x46x26	29x19x26	38x35x35		2
Audio Pro Image 44 system	1150	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Good-looking, well-made and a fine listen.	100	87	4	116x13x22	20x13x18	13x42x18	38x35x35		Bk
B&W 704 System	4000	03.06/GT	★★★★☆	For big movie bass the 704 shifts air like no other rival.	120	89	8	96x22x26	31x45x29	30x38x17	44x40x48	●	4
B&W 805S/HTM4S/ASW825	5750	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker package £2500+ in Awards 2005.	120	88	8	42x24x35	28x49x29	42x24x35	53x53x35	●	3
B&W DM 603 S3 (7 spks)	1850	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Amazes - needs space to be heard at its best.	100	88	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	34x34x41	●	3
B&W DM300 series	900	02.03/FT	★★★★★	A superb set-up but too big for some rooms.	100	88	8	91x20x31	15x42x21	33x20x24	41x33x38	●	2
B&W DM600 series	1000	07.02/ST	★★★★★	A beautiful B&W system and it sounds great.	150	89	8	91x20x29	20x54x31	29x17x22	No	●	3
Canton CD300/360F/AS725SC	2700	UGSY.06	★★★★☆	Smart, hi-tech designer speakers that sound good too.	110	87.5	4-8	120x12x16	60x12x16	60x12x16	45x30x47		Al
Crane Audio Oceana 3	600	05.05/ST	★★★★☆	Polished looks and performance - worth an audition.	100	89	8	91x13x14	49x13x14	25x13x14	25x44x35		Al
Crane Audio Oceana 5	840	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Surprisingly musical for a stylish system.	140	89	8	105x19x20	19x58x20	30x19x20	25x44x35		Al
DALI Concept	1293	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	With punchy electronics it delivers a big sound.	100	87	8	93x20x26	16x50x23	31x17x19	41x38x42		2
DALI Suite	2074	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive package that does many things very well.	80	86	4	88x17x31	16x56x32	33x24x14	41x38x42	●	2
Eltax Summit 5.0/Impact 10	500	04.04/ST	★★★☆☆	A steal but it doesn't hang together too well.	130	87	8	84x21x25	14x36x20	20x14x20	35x35x35	●	Bch
Epos ELS3 5.1	956	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker package under £1000 in Award 2005.	100	87	4	27x17x20	17x51x21	27x17x20	37x34x45		3
Final Acoustics HT801/S80	1535	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	Tempting package that works well with pampering.	150	86	8	53x16x7	16x53x7	53x16x7	25x25x25	●	2
Focal-JMlab Chorus 714S	1326	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Perfect for multichannel music enthusiasts.	90	91	8	90x20x27	15x44x25	30x18x20	34x32x38		3
Focal-JMlab Profile 908 system	6000	UGSY.06	★★★★★	Refined with music and very capable with movies.	90	89	8	39x23x28	20x63x32	39x23x28	49x51x38		3
Jamo D7PEX (7.1)	4499	02.03/FT	★★★★☆	Seven speakers and two subwoofers - good value.	100	87	4	27x59x17	27x59x17	27x51x13	49x59x44		Gry
KEF iQ3 AV	1160	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a thoroughly professional sound.	150	88	8	37x22x33	17x51x26	30x18x26	36x50x33	●	4
KEF iQ5 AV	1450	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Hugely competent with both music and movies.	150	83	8	82x18x26	17x51x26	18x36x18	36x50x33	●	5
KEF KHT6000 ACE	1850	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive looks but lacks sonic prowess for the price.	100	87	8	60x12x9	12x58x9	60x12x9	45x60x40		Sl
Linn Komponent	3250	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Neat, good sounding, well thought-out package.	min60	85	6	1001x18x16	18x56x16	25x18x16	14x50dia	●	2
M&K 850THX	3550	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Highly innovative.	200	90	4	41x18x22	18x41x22	88x23x11	47x39x52		3
Mission Elegante e82	3990	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best full-size package over £2000 in Awards 2004	150	85	8	96x30x33	17x44x25	28x16x25	42x37x40	●	Gry
Mission m3i Cinema	879	02.05/FT	★★★★★	One of the finest-sounding we've heard at the price.	75	88	8	95x20x30	17x43x23	26x17x28	41x28x50	●	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2 AV	800	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Integration, crisp detail and lively dynamics.	80	88	6	35x19x25	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va
Monitor Audio Bronze B4 AV	950	12.05/GT	★★★★★	You won't run short of thrills with this package.	80	91	6	85x19x26	16x46x16	29x29x13	32x32x34	●	Va
Monitor Audio GR20 AV	2800	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	This is a quality package with plenty of appeal.	100	88	6	93x20x30	20x56x23	23x36x18	n/a	●	4
Monitor Audio Silver RS1 AV	1650	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Class-leading set-up that is worth every penny.	120	89	6	31x19x28	19x50x24	29x29x13	34x34x37	●	5
Monitor Audio Silver RS6AV	1900	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Speaker package Product of the Year in Awards 2005	120	89	6	85x19x25	19x50x24	29x29x13	34x34x37	●	5

Monitor Audio Silver RS6AV

Consisting of Silver RS6 floorstanders at the front, Silver RS-LCR centre channel, Silver RS-FX surround and the RSW-12 subwoofer – this system will give you truly exceptional sound. Delivery is clean, crisp and unadulterated; it peers deep into DVD soundtracks and uncovers a fantastic level of detail and insight.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
SPEAKER PACKAGES
MONITOR AUDIO RS6 AV

Mordaunt-Short Avant 5.1	780	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Great-value - builds on strengths of the MS309 sub.	100	87	4	80x17x34	17x49x20	23x22x15	37x37x37		2
Mordaunt-Short Performance 5.1	10000	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive, they will leave you breathless.	150	89	4	121x24x37	60x21x22	121x24x37	50x50x50	●	2
Naim N-System	3385	UGSY.06	★★★★★	High-quality presentation whether from DVD or CD.	100	87	6	29x20x20	16x43x30	29x20x20	39x39x39		3
Panasonic SBPF80051	1420	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Eye-catching and pleasant - it's worth considering.	100	81	6	108x27x28	15x38x21	38x15x21	47x26x47	●	
Pioneer S-V810A	1700	UGSY.06	★★★★★	Look gorgeous and the sound has plenty of poise.	130	88	6	119x25x30	22x56x30	35x19x29	48x43x43		Bch
PMC GB1/DB1 M-C/DB1/TLE1	3795	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Ideal for both music and movie lovers.	150	87	8	87x16x23	16x29x23	29x16x23	55x20x55	●	3
PMC OB1/CB6/FB1+/TLE1	7445	UGSY.06	★★★★★	Design and excellent build ensure knockout sound.	150	87	6	102x20x32	19x24x12	100x20x30	55x20x55	●	6
ProAc St 140/110/Res.CC1/ER1	3750	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Built from two ranges but homogeneity is incredible.	150	88	8	104x19x28	18x45x19	38x20x24	43x38x38	●	3
Quad L Series (12L/11L/Lsub)	1930	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Full-size package Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	150	86	6	33x21x25	31x19x24	33x21x25	53x34x47	●	4
Revel Concerta Package	2700	03.06/FT	★★★★☆	Powerful but cultured - demands a big room.	200	87	6	105x22x39	23x53x26	32x36x21	36x34x41	●	3
Ruark Acou. Prologue II(7 spk)	3165	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	An appealing solution with extra Epilogue II surrounds	120	87	6	96x21x24	17x45x19	27x19x23	42x43x43	●	4
Spendor S5e/C9e/SR5/REL Storm 5	4445	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Unconventional but the results are deeply impressive.	125	87	8	79x17x26	23x60x36	31x31x18	52x35x37	●	4
Tannoy Eyris	2250	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Better for music, including multichannel, than movies	75	88	8	102x20x26	21x43x26	24x28x17	n/a	●	2
Tannoy Sensys 5.1	1200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	No shortage of ability, or cubic capacity - excellent sub.	110	88	8	91x21x29	21x35x28	35x21x29	32x29x29		3
Triad Silver Series	4180	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for home cinema, but for music it can be beaten	125	83	4	48x22x24	22x48x24	36x34x9	41x40x39		22
Triangle Celius/Noxa/Major/Meteor	3075	03.06/GT	★★★★☆	If you're power-hungry this could be ideal for you.	160	91	8	118x31x37	20x59x31	42x20x18	52x30x58	●	3
Vienna Schon./Web/Berg/Sub	3700	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers that sound amazingly good.	180	91	4	105x27x9	27x50x9	27x21x9	40x64x22		Al
Vifa Reference	3200	06.06/FT	★★★★★	A must-hear if you have a large enough room.	200	88	8	125x27x42	19x55x24	20x33x	inc		Rw
Wharfedale Diamond 8 Cinema	400	09.01/FT	★★★★★	Look and sound more expensive than they are.	100	86	6	80x21x26	18x45x18	30x20x18	n/a		2
Wharfedale Diamond 9.1AV	910	Awd05/GT	★★★★★	Exciting and great-value, with masses of detail on offer.	100	86	6	30x19x28	19x40x23	30x19x28	42x42x38	●	5
Wharfedale Dia. 9.4/9CS/9.1/SW250	995	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	An involving sound but not an all-rounder.	100	86	6	80x22x30	19x40x23	30x19x28	42x42x38	●	5
Wharfedale Dia 9.4/DFS/.CC/SW250	950	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Only the 9.CC centre stops it challenging the best.	100	86	6	80x22x30	12x33x13	28x29x13	42x42x38	●	4

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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PC & MP3 speakers

Add sound to your PC, MP3 or games console

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	System max power (w)	Lowest sens (db/w/m)	Lowest Imp (ohms)	DIMENSIONS (hwd) Front	Centre	Rear	Sub	Biwire	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aego M	100	01.06/FT	★★★★★	Looks great , its cheap and very, very good.	A85	-	-	10x7x9	-	-	27x19x35		2
Acoustic Energy Aego M-System	100	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Small design with a big sound - great desktop fodder.	A80	-	-	9x7x9			20x27x36		Wt/Bk
Altec Lansing 5100	100	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Check it out if you're not bothered about low-end grunt.	73	70	4	18x6x6	7x16x5	18x6x6	30x17x34		Al
Altec Lansing FX6021	180	02.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Disappointing - we've heard better from Altec Lansing.	A13/A50	-	-	37x6x19	-	-	41x22x20		Sl
Altec Lansing inMotion iM3	130	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Jack of all trades iPod system - decent sound.	A4	-	-	20x14x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Altec Lansing inMotion iM7	200	05.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Lots of design plusses but sound lacks refinement.	A25+A25	-	-	17x42x17					Wt/Sl
Altec Lansing inMotion iMini	110	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Inoffensive offering for iPod Mini owners.	A4	-	8	11x18x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Apple iPod Hi-Fi	249	05.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Not what we expected and not good enough.	n/a	-		17x43x18	-	-	-		2
Audica MPS-1	250	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Cool speakers and an amp designed for MP3 players.	25	-	-	16x8x19(spks)	14x10x18(amp)				Bl/Al
Bose SoundDock	249	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	In terms of looks and sound this is the stylish option.	n/a	-	-	30x17x16(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Creative Inspire T3030	40	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Cracking-value - ideal for the kids or your laptop.	A6/A17	-	-	22x9x8			26x20x18		Bk
Creative TravelSound 400	50	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Sound entertaining rather than polished.	2x2	-	-	7x16x4					Sl/Bk
Cyruslink LinkCentre	100	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Large satellites and a sub - this systems rocks.	90	-	-	19x13x16	-	-	29x19x28		Wt
Cyruslink LinkDock	70	04.06/FT	★★★★★	One of the best iPod-docking systems we've heard.	4	-	-	11x21x10(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Eclipse TD TD307 PA	400	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Produce an incredibly clear and precise sound.	12	80	8	16x12x16	-	-	-		3
Gear4 Pocket Party	25	08.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Super-light iPod travel speaker - was called PodGear.	1	-	-	2.9x8x2.9	-	-	-		Wt
Gear4 Shuffle Station	35	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Affordable but no stunner - was called PodGear.	3	-	4	16x10x3(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Intempo iDS-01	30	04.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Cheap iPod dock, but it is false economy.	6	-	-	23x12x9(unit)	-	-	-		Wt
Jamo I300	300	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	High-quality sound, plus an impressive feature count.	150	-	-	9x9x9	-	-	25x25x25		Wt
JBL Encounter	99	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best MP3 speaker system in Awards 2005.	A13/A34	-	-	15x9dia	-	-	25x7dia		Wt
JBL On Stage	130	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching iPod speaker system - decent sound.	A6	-	-	18x18x5(unit)					Wt
JBL On Tour	70	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Boombox affair for use with MP3s, CD and computers.	A3	-	-	4x18x9	-	-	-		Wt
Kensington sx2000	100	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	iPod dock with a big flat-panel speaker that goes loud.	11	-	-	18x41x10(unit)					Wt
Logic3 iStation	60	08.05/GT	★★★☆☆	An iPod docking station - decent stereo/sub solution.	A6/A6	-	-	14x20x4(unit)	-	-	inc		Wt
Logitech mm50	100	04.06/GT	★★★★★	This dock is easily the best travel buddy for your iPod.	-			14x35x11(unit)					Wt
Ministry of Sound MOSAS113	50	02.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Neat idea, but sound quality is not up to speed.	A8/A24	-	-	16x9x12	-	-	26x14x24		Sl
Monitor Audio i-deck	250	05.06/GT	★★★★★	Best iPod audio dock in Awards 2005. Great sounding.	A18	87	-	19x44x15(unit)	-	-	-		Wt/Gry

Monitor Audio i-deck

Excellent any-room companion for your iPod – the main unit docks your iPod and its 18w per channel amplifier powers the supplied stereo speakers. This is the most convincing iPod docking speaker system we've heard yet. Its spacious sound, which rivals leading micro systems, goes loud – very loud.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
MP3 PLAYERS & ACCESSORIES
MONITOR AUDIO I-DECK

NHT M-00	438	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Functional, loud approach to the desktop question.	A75	-	-	23x15x19	-	-	-		Bk
Oregon Scientific iBall (iPod spk)	200	01.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	The wireless feature works well but the sound is poor.	n/a	-	-	19x20x19	-	-	-		Wt
Roth Audioblob 2	150	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Looks classy and has above average sonic delivery.	A12/A24	-	-	14x10x10	-	-	29x22x28		2
Saitek A-200	80	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Clever, distinctive looking unit for MP3, PSP and PC.	A3	-	-	21x15x23	-	-	-		Bk
Xitel HiFi-Link	60	06.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Handy iPod dock with preamp, charger and remote.	-	-	-						Wt

Home cinema in a box (with DVD)

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Bose Lifestyle 18	1750	11.03/FT	★★★☆☆	We like it, but the performance is around for less.	200			●											●	●	●		8
Denon D-M51DVS	500	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Likeable 2.1 system, commendable in Dolby Virtual mode.	2x35/A100			●	●	●									●		●	●	2
Denon DHT-500SD	500	03.06/ST	★★★★★	Still right among the front-runners, even in its dotage.	6x100			●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	2
Denon Smart Life S-101	850	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Appealing - movie surround sound without all the boxes.	2x50/A100			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	3/1
Denon Smart Life S-301	1250	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box over £1000 in Awards 2005.	2x70/A140	●	●	●	●	●									●	●	●	●	1/2
Goodmans 1990DVD	130	07.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Astoundingly cheap and has a decent component picture.	135			●				●							●	●	●	●	
Jamo DVR50/A355PDD	899	UGSY.06	★★★★★	A lot of thought has gone into this package and it shows.	5x50			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	5
JBL DSC 1000	400	10.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent sonically, but delivers a disappointing picture.	5x50/A100	●		●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	2
JVC EX-A1	400	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Compact solution for smaller rooms - decent sonic delivery.	2x30														●	●		●	2
JVC EX-D5	400	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Works handsomely where surround sound isn't craved.	2x18	●		●		●									●	●	●		2/1
JVC EX-P1	300	04.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Different twist on a micro-system - plays DVDs in stereo.	30	●		●		●												●	
JVC TH-P7	279	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Better all-rounder than we thought available at this price.	40			●		●		●							●	●		●	
KEF KIT 100	999	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Chic system with effective surround sound.	4x40/60			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	3/1
LG LHW551TB	400	03.06/ST	★★★★☆	Elegant looks and wireless rear speakers.	5x70/150			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	2/1
Linn Classik Movie	2750	03.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Appealing, but far too expensive for what it offers	5x75			●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	5/4
Ministry of Sound MOSDV131	200	07.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Definitely one for the kids - delivers reasonable performance.	170			●				●							●	●	●	●	
NAD L73/PSB Image B25	950	UGSY.06	★★★☆☆	Enjoyably meaty sound but it's not a class leader.	21x60			●											●	●	●	●	7/3
Naim N-Vi	2995	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Remarkable - great one-box solution.	5x50				●	●		●			●				●	●	●	●	/5
Nakamichi SoundSpace 8 1/2	2599	01.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable of good results - but it's far from cheap.	5x10			●				●							●	●	●		5
Philips HTS8000S	500	03.06/ST	★★★★★	Bargain - high performance to match stylish exterior.	550		●	●	●	●		●							●	●	●	●	2/0
Philips LX7500R	550	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box £500-£1000 in Awards 2005.	5x100			●		●		●								●	●	●	2
Pioneer DCS-353	279	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Dynamic, punchy sound and a smooth, sharp HDMI image.	5x60/A60			●	●	●		●							●			●	1/-

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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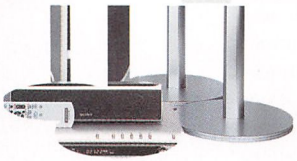
Home cinema in a box (with DVD) cont...

Instant surround sound solutions for maximum convenience and style

BUDGET Up to £3000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	PLAYS: DVD-A	SACD	MP3	DVD+R/+RW	DVD-R/-RW	DVD-RAM	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS Neo:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Pioneer RCS-77H	700	03.06/ST	★★★★★	Notable value - includes a DVD and hard-disk recorder.	360	●	●	●	●	●		●							●	●		●	1/2
Roadstar TVD5004(portable)	200	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Boombox packed with features including a mini-TV - flawed.	2x2.5			●															0
Samsung HT-P1200	800	04.06/FT	★★★★☆	Genuinely novel system, with a wide range of abilities.	6x130	●	●	●	●	●			●						●	●			2/2
Sony DAV-DZ500F	449	03.06/ST	★★★★★	Best home cinema in a box under £500 in Awards 2005.	5x143/A285			●	●	●		●								●		●	2



Sony DAV-DZ500F

Sonically and visually this is a barnstoring performer, which coupled with Sony's trademark usability and appealing design makes this a stunning system. Unlike some budget systems, this system produces a brilliant picture that will give bags of pleasure and sonically it has the balance of a gymnast, and the agility, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS
BEST HOME CINEMA IN A BOX UNDER £500
SONY DAV-DZ500F

Sony DAV-X1	900	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Makes sense as a 2.1 system - sound doesn't surround.	2x21/20/60		●	●	●	●		●							●			●	1/1
Tatung THT5150S	149	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Massively impressive for the price - very enjoyable system.			●					●								●	●	●	6
TEAC DV-L800/AG-L800	900	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks good, but it is no advance on cheaper rivals.	6x50			●				●	●	●					●	●	●	●	6
TEAC Legacy 700/LS-L800	1100	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Awards 2003. Great all-round.	30x5/A100			●		●		●							●	●	●	●	8
TEAC Legacy 800/LS-L800	1300	Awd03/FT	★★★★☆	Cracking system with the right mix of style and substance.	5x50			●				●							●		●		8
Yamaha DVX-S200	450	09.04/ST	★★★★★	Excellent sound and progressive scan pictures.	5x100		●	●		●		●				●			●	●	●	●	2
Yamaha DVX-S30	600	03.06/ST	★★★★☆	Natural picture and big sound from small speakers.	6x35		●	●	●	●		●								●		●	4/3

Home cinema in a box

Surround sound add-ons for those who already own a DVD player

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Power (w)	SURROUND MODES: Pro-Logic II	Pro-Logic IIx	Dolby Digital EX	DTS NEO:6	DTS-ES Matrix	DTS-ES Discrete	DTS 96/24	Composite out	Component out	S-Video out	RGB Scart out	Audio outs/ins
Klegg M6-501P	549	04.03/GT	★★★☆☆	The Klegg is a sexy decoder/speaker package, but not ideal for long-term.	5x30												5
Klegg M8 501	700	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Comprehensive and competent package with good power and drive.	5x100	●											5
Spherex Xbox 5.1	400	03.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Ideal for keen gamers. Fantastic spread of sound but it lacks all round ability.	300	●											4
Yamaha AV57	200	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Cracking value for money if you're looking for your first foray into home cinema.	5x105	●		●	●	●			●	●			2/6
Yamaha YSP-1000	900	03.06/FT	★★★★☆	Digital Sound Projector. Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	40x2/2x20	●			●				●	●			5
Yamaha YSP-800	600	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Digital Sound Projector. Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	21x2/2x20	●			●				●				1/5

Yamaha YSP-800

An ingenious design – Yamaha's digital sound projector uses a total of 23 drivers to amplify multichannel surround sound from just one box. Refreshingly it couldn't be simpler to operate, as after entering basic room details all you do is hit the remote and automated calibration does it all for you.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
YAMAHA DIGITAL SOUND PROJECTORS

Yamaha YSP-800/YST-FSW100	750	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Sound projector and subwoofer - ingenious and well executed.	2x21/2x20/60	●					●			●										2/1

CRT TVs

Conventional TVs that offer great performance and value

BUDGET Up to £5500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	DECODING: Intergrated digital	Dolby Digital	DTS	Pro Logic II	Pro Logic	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Phono out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Goodmans GTV69RF2	350	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Overall, a very competitive television for the money.	28								●	●					79x57x50	41
Loewe Aconda C32 DR+	1399	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CRT TV/recorder combination in Awards 2004.	32								●	●	●	●	●	●	63x86x58	55

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40 YEARS 1961-2001

Olsons new *Sound Fantastic* range of units are specifically designed for both the home and professional hi-fi audio markets.

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Home Entertainment – POWER VERDICT UP

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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CRT TVs continued...

Conventional TVs that offer great performance and value

BUDGET Up to £5500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DECODING: Screen size (in)	Intergrated digital	Dolby Digital	DTS	Pro Logic II	Pro Logic	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Phono out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Loewe Aventos 3981 ZW	799	04.03/FT	★★★★☆	Sounds great, but pipped for picture by its rivals.	32								●	●	●	●	●		60x81x56	53
Loewe Nemos 32	999	01.05/ST	★★★★☆	Not cheap, but a hugely desirable and flexible package.	32								●	●		●	●		60x90x55	57

Plasma & rear-projection TVs

Slimline, stylish televisions available in huge screen sizes

BUDGET Up to £6000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Integrated tuner	Resolution (wd)	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimensions (hwd)	Weight (kg)
Fujitsu P42HTA51	1995	04.06/ST	★★★★☆	Offers plenty, including a fine picture, at an impressive price.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	104x64x9	37
Hitachi 42PD7200	2000	04.06/ST	★★★★☆	Lively and lovely DVD picture and solid off-air - cracking-value.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x105x10	37
Hitachi 42PD7500	2200	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent HD-Ready plasma - solid TV and DVD picture.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x105x11	37
Hitachi 55PMA550E	5000	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent choice if you want a TV screen this big.	55		1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	86x139x11	63.5
LG 42PX5D	1800	UGHD.06	★★★★☆	If your budget is tight you'll find little to complain about here.	42	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		65x125x10	52.7
Loewe Xelos A42	2699	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Possibly the best sounding plasma we've ever heard.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●		●	●	●	74x107x11	40
NEC 42XR4	2075	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	Vibrant stable picture, stylish looks and decent specs.	42		1024x768	●	●		●	●			61x102x10	27.6
Panasonic TH-37PX60	2200	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Stunning addition to the Viera range - amazing performance.	37	●	1024x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x103x10	27.6
Panasonic TH-65PV500	10000	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	The best big-screen plasma we've seen.	65	●	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	99x155x15	84
Pioneer PDP-435FDE	2750	10.04/FT	★★★☆☆	A let down, it lacks the hoped-for visual sparkle (was £3700).	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	26.8
Pioneer PDP-435XDE	3000	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning design and peerless pictures via the HDMI input.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x112x9	27
Pioneer PDP-436SXE	2500	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Stunning - includes an integrated digital tuner and speakers.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	70x108x12	32
Pioneer PDP-436XDE	2800	04.06/ST	★★★★★	Best 40in+ flatscreen TV in Awards 2005.	43	●	1024x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	63x108x9	26

Pioneer PDP-436XDE

Pioneer's latest, sixth generation of plasma panel is a terrific set: for colour brilliance, image sharpness and vibrancy it takes your breath away. It looks good even with off-air TV: feed it a scaled DVD signal, or some High-Def video, and it's jaw-dropping. Even the optional speakers sound good.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TELEVISIONS
BEST 40IN+ FLATSCREEN TV
PIONEER PDP-436XDE

Pioneer PDP-506XDE	3800	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Doesn't matter how big, Pioneer's plasmas are a joy to watch.	50	●	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	72x122x9	32
Sagem Axium HD-D45F (rear-proj)	1099	UGHD.06	★★★☆☆	Decent buy but the performance is average rather than stellar.	45	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	79x106x37	28
Sagem Axium HD-D56	1599	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	If you want a super-sized TV at a reasonable price take a look.	56	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	110x143x60	37
Sagem HD-D50HG4T(rear-proj)	1299	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Accomplished picture for very reasonable money.	50	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●		86x130x40	29
Samsung SP50L7HX (rear-proj)	3500	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Fantastic value DLP rear-projection TV - outstanding with DVD.	50	●	1280x720	●	●	●	●	●	●		139x136x52	57
SIM2 Domino 55M	4000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent big screen - wonderful with both Hi-Def and DVD.	55		1280x720	●	●		●	●	●	●	98x132x41	54
SIM2 RTX55H(rear-projection)	7000	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Rear-projection DLP TV - possibly the world's best big-screen TV.	55	●	1280x720	●	●		●	●	●		122x150x42	85
Sony KDF-E50A12U (rear-proj)	1400	UGHD.06	★★★★☆	Good option if you want a 50in screen for little money.	50	●	1280x720	●	●		●	●	●		98x132x41	54
Yamaha PDM-4210	3995	07.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine performer in every sense - in the upper echelon of plasmas.	42	●	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	64x 103 X9	35.2

LCD TVs

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
B&O BeoVision 6-26	3250	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Good picture and sound but it carries a hefty price tag.	26	15:9	1280x720			●				●	58x71x18	24
B&O BeoVision 7-32	5995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amazing - sublime picture, impressive sound and looks.	32	16:9	1366x768			●					57x88x16	30

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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LCD TVs continued...

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Beko 17WLB450S	250	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Decent for this price, but it's not comfortable with motion.	17	16:9	1280x1024			●	●		●		37x54x9	6
Bush LCD27TV005	500	08.05/ST	★★★☆☆	You can't be too harsh at this price but don't expect miracles.	27	16:9	1280x768				●		●	●	50x78x21	13
Bush LCD27TV006HD	500	05.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Choose if money is tight - you won't get better at this price.	27	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	51x71x25	15
Daewoo DSL17D3	300	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Decent off-air pictures and impressive for movies.	17	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		31x54x6	5
Digilogic D15LCDTV-1	200	06.06/ST	★★☆☆☆	Tempting price but the DVD performance is upsetting.	15	16:9	1084x78			●	●		●		36x46x17	5
DMTech LM20D	490	06.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Useable solution trying to get out, but off-air quality is ropey.	20	4:3	640x480			●	●		●		24x51x5	5
Dual DLCD1501	170	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Fine little TV at a giveaway price - available at Asda.	15	4:3	1024x768			●	●		●		36x46x17	5.6
Dual DLCD3201	699	02.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Plenty to appeal, but old-style LCD flaws let it down.	32	16:9	1366x768			●	●		●	●	5x92x24	28
Evesham Audio V32EMRO-ZE3	750	07.06/ST	★★☆☆☆	You can get better quality for not much more money.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	65x82x23	22
Goodmans GLCD17DVB	350	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	If you want Freeview this will do the job but the picture is poor.	17	4:3	1280x1024			●	●		●		42x41x8	7
Hitachi 32LD7200	1400	07.06/ST	★★☆☆☆	HD-ready and performs OK, but newer rivals are better.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	55x84x12	18
Humax LGB-26DTT	799	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Give this serious consideration - tested at £1500.	26	16:9	1280x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	54x70x23	28
Humax LGB-32TPVR	1399	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	Has an analogue and digital tuner and a 40GB hard-disk drive.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		60x83x23	25
Humax LGB17DTT	400	06.06/ST	★★★★☆	Quality product - fine build, easy to use and agreeable picture	17	16:9	1024x768			●	●		●		39x47x19	7
JVC LT-26A61SJ	800	05.06/GT	★★★☆☆	We've seen worse - buy if you find a really good deal.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	53x69x27	14
JVC LT-32DS6	2000	11.05/ST	★★★★☆	Good looking set - great with DVD and high-def content.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x80x23	20
JVC LT-32DX7	1100	07.06/ST	★★★★☆	Good picture and sound - as a day-to-day TV, it offers much.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	57x84x11	23
JVC LT-37DS6	2100	01.06/ST	★★☆☆☆	Off-air pictures leave something to be desired.	37	16:9	1366x768				●	●	●	●	63x93x11	26
JVC LT-40DS7	2000	06.07/FT	★★★☆☆	Reasonable performer but only average value in this market.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	64x83x30	19.8
LG 26LX2R	650	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	Does a very fine job of everything you ask of it for the price.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	53x69x27	14
LG 32LP1D	1300	11.05/ST	★★★☆☆	LG's feature-laden set is a bold move, but its picture is less so.	32	16:9	1366x768	●		●	●	●	●	●	61x81x34	20
LG 32LX2R	950	07.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Unusual, if not entirely satisfactory performance.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	55x92x13	21
Loewe Concept L26	1100	05.06/GT	★★★★★	A class above competitors - expensive but worth every penny.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	53x69x27	14
Loewe Concept L32	1499	11.05/ST	★★★★★	Excels using high-definition or even regular DVD sources.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	48x97x12	16.5
Loewe Individual 32 Selection	2299	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	Delivers highly confident picture and sound - choice of finishes.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	62x83x32	27.4
Loewe Spheros 37 HD/DR+	3799	10.04/GT	★★★★☆	Very tempting - this version has a hard disk recorder/internet.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x99x9	31
Loewe Spheros R26	1899	01.06/FT	★★★★★	High quality and a small screen - a set to lust after.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●		●	●	●	56x68x11	20.5
Loewe Spheros R37 Master.	5800	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive, but a fine performer and great long-term investment.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	106x99x8.8	67
Loewe Xelos A26	1299	08.05/ST	★★★★★	Fine sounding and outstanding pictures - high-def-ready.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	52x70x12	14
Loewe Xelos SL 37HD/DR+	3299	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Potential for lots of extras in one TV including a hard-disk.	37	16:9	1366X768	●	●	●	●	●	●		68x99x9	22
Loewe Xelos SL20	799	06.04/ST	★★★★☆	Bit of a head-turner in both design and performance stakes.	20	4:3	640x480			●				●	54x54x26	9
Mogen ML-1508TN	170	01.06/FT	★★★★★	For the money, this Sainsburys only 15in flat TV is terrific.	15	16:9	1024x768			●			●		37x37x18	4.2
Panasonic TX-26LXD60	1000	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail, good contrast, HD-ready and a Freeview tuner.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	53x66x30	15
Panasonic TX-32LXD60	1300	07.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Reasonable set with good tuners and a neat design.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●		61x79x11	19.5
Philips 17PF9946	700	12.04/ST	★★★★☆	Gorgeous aesthetics and the picture quality is good.	17	16:9	1280x768			●	●		●	●	45x33x18	5
Philips 26PF9946	900	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Performance and price make it an ideal second-room screen.	26	16:9	1280-768			●	●		●	●	43x69x24	11
Philips 32PF9830	2000	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Flatscreen TV Product of the year in Awards 2005.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x100x10	20
Philips 32PF9986	2500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best LCD/plasma TV 30-36in in Awards 2004. Now £500 less.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x100x10	20
Philips 37PF9830	2800	01.06/ST	★★★★☆	Decent sound and fine HDMI pictures and truly futureproof.	37	16:9	1920x1080	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	113x10x68	27
Philips 37PF9986	4000	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	The high price and some picture problems mean it's outgunned.	37	16:9	1366 x 768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	68x113x10	27
Philips 42PF9967	1800	04.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Great price and decent specs but the picture is mediocre.	42	16:9	1024x1024	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	14x110x78	42
Philips 42PF9986	6000	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Big on screen size but small on performance.	42	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●			●	76x124x10	35
Roadstar LCD7269 (portable)	150	07.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Its appeal depends entirely on how essential TV is to you.	7	16:9								●	26x31x4	7

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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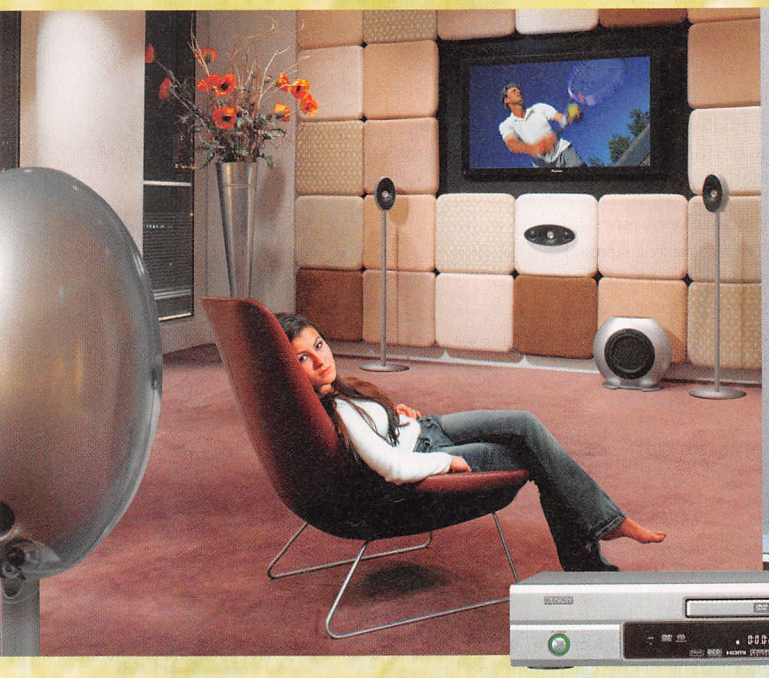

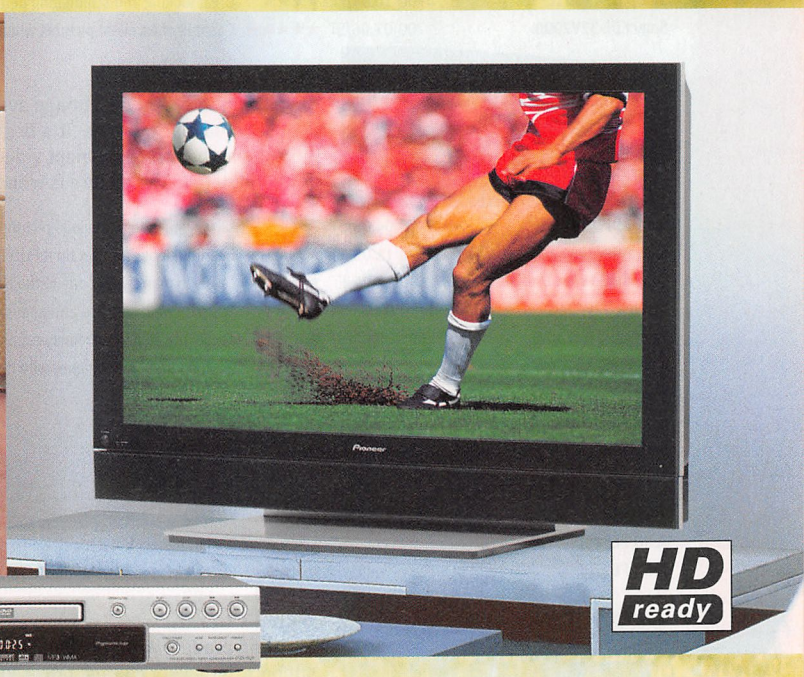

System shown features:
KEF KHT 3005 Speaker Package

System shown features:
Pioneer PDP-436XDE Plasma
Denon DVD 1920 DVD Player
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LCD TVs continued...

Slim TVs on offer in every size from portable to big-screen

BUDGET Up to £5000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Screen size (in)	Aspect ratio	Resolution	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	Phono in	Dimension (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Sagem HD-L26T	799	05.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	There are much better TVs around at this price level.	26	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	48x85x20	20
Sagem HD-L32	999	11.05/ST	★★★★☆	Gives you a lot for your money including an HDMI input.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	56x104x14	24.5
Samsung LE32R74	900	07.06/ST	★★★★☆	Stylish, budget belter - a decent picture backs up the looks.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	49x80x9	14.8
Samsung SM940MW	360	06.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Appealing features but the picture performance is ordinary.	17	16:9	1440x900			●	●	●	●		29x53x6	5
Sanyo 23LC4 'Nicolas'	650	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Hit-and-miss - looks good but its performance is not.	23	16:9	1280x720			●	●			●	48x58x26	n/a
Sharp Aquos LC32P50E	850	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Unusual but effective set - truly outstanding with standard TV.	32	16:9	960x540			●		●	●	●	80x64x29	16
Sharp LC-37GD7E	1700	01.06/ST	★★★★☆	Pictures via HDMI are excellent and it looks good.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	64x80x7	24
Sharp LC-45GD1E	4700	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great looking and scintillating performance with HD video.	45	16:9	1920x1080	●	●	●		●	●	●	65x108x9	22.4
Sony KDL-32V2000	1700	07.06/ST	★★★★★	Capable of excellent pictures whatever the source.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	60x79x10	17

Sony KDL-32V2000

If you want the very best image available in this size class, the Bravia KDL-32V2000 is your boy. It's beautifully smooth and colourful, free from noise, whether on component video or HDMI, and it's blessed with superb levels of detail. The picture is wonderfully punchy, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Sony KDL-V40A12U	2400	04.06/ST	★★★★★	Ultra-slim, with a fabulous picture - it's worth every penny.	40	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	101x72x37	34
Sony KDLV32A12U	1800	11.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Beautiful looks and set-up for HD TV - performance disappoints.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	61x81x32	24.5
Sony KLVS19A10U	600	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Lovely in many ways - one of the best Sony LCDs we've seen.	19	15:9	1280x768	●	●	●		●			36x47x8	7.0
Toshiba 32WLT66	1200	07.06/ST	★★★★★	Superb - well specified and near-faultless performance.	32	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●		●	61x79x30	19
ViewSonic N2750W	699	08.05/ST	★★★★☆	Keenly priced and extremely capable but no DVI/HDMI sockets.	27	16:9	1280x720			●	●	●	●	●	50x78x21	13
ViewSonic N3760W	1099	01.06/ST	★★★★☆	Prodigious value for money with decent DVD reproduction.	37	16:9	1366x768	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	73x96x12	25

Projectors

Bring the cinema into your front room

BUDGET Up to £9500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Type	Aspect ratio	Max screen (in)	Throw ratio	INPUTS: Progressive PAL	Progressive NTSC	RGB Scart	Composite in	Component in	S-Video in	DVI-D	HDMI	Weight (kg)
BenQ PE5120	499	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	It's not perfect but it's well worth shortlisting.	DLP	16:9	300	1.64-2.37	●	●		●	●	●	●		3.0
BenQ PE7700	1291	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Projector Product of the Year in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	300	1.18-1.61	●	●		●	●	●		●	5.5

BenQ PE7700

Startling product with ridiculously good picture performance, including HD-Ready support, for a very modest price. Via DVD the detail is excellent and images remain stable, but whack in some high-def video and the image really flies. It is easy to set up and use, too, with neat on-screen graphics and a backlit remote.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
PROJECTORS
BENQ PE7700

Digital Proj iVision HD Digital	6995	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking - small fuss-free and a superb picture.	DLP	16:9	217	1.75-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●		3
Hitachi PJ-TX200	1200	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	A budget belter: this is a must-see projector.	LCD	16:9	300	1.3-2.13	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	4.7
InFocus IN72	900	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Table-top design that is brilliant given the price.	DLP	16:9	n/a	1.76-2.12	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.2
InFocus IN76	1699	06.06/FT	★★★★★	A breeze to set-up and hugely impressive.	DLP	16:9	108	1.53-1.94	●	●		●	●		●	●	4.2
InFocus ScreenPlay 4805	799	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Best projector under £1000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	108	1.77-2.13	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	3.0
InFocus ScreenPlay 5700	1999	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Projector Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9	126	1.89-2.63	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.2
InFocus ScreenPlay 7205	2799	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best projector £3000-£5000 in Awards 2004.	DLP	16:9	126	1.67-2.08	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	4.3
InFocus ScreenPlay 7210	3499	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Best projector £2000-£4000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	132	1.67-2.08	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	4.3
InFocus ScreenPlay 777	9999	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Improved 777 - better, cheaper and still sexy.	DLP	16:9	180	7 lens opt	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	20.2
LG AN110	1500	06.06/FT	★★★★☆	The pros outweigh the cons big-time here.	DLP	16:9	100	n/a	●	●		●	●	●		●	4.5
Marantz VP-10S1	23000	12.04/FT	★★★★★	Amazing reference-quality image from this giant.	DLP	16:9	300	3 lens opt	●	●		●	●	●	●		41
NEC WT610	3120	02.06/GT	★★★☆☆	If you are short of space this is a viable option.	DLP	4:3	n/a	0.2-2.2	●	●		●	●	●	●		6
Optoma H27	699	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Belies its price tag with a great performance.	DLP	16:9	241	1.87-2.25	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	2.5
Optoma MovieTime	850	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Projector DVD combo - quality isn't quite there.	DLP	16:9	359	1.26-1.41			●	●		●			3.5
Panasonic PT-AE900	1500	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Thrills - this is a bona fide, budget bargain.	LCD	16:9	200	1.34-1.39	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	3.6
Projectiondesign Action Two	3500	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Performance to rival far pricier alternatives.	DLP	16:9	300	1.9-2.40	●	●		●		●	●		3.0
Runco Reflection CL-510	5995	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Well worth the money if you can afford it.	DLP	16:9	200	1.75-2.00	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		10
Sagem MDP 1600	799	06.05/GT	★☆☆☆☆	Despite its price this is far from good value.	DLP	4:3	276	n/a				●		●			1.9
Sharp XV-Z12000	4000	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent performance in every regard.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	9.4
Sharp XV-Z2000	2500	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Good resolution and impressive detail.	DLP	16:9	300	-	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		4.2
SIM2 C3X LITE	10995	11.05/FT	★★★★★	The biggest leap forward since the birth of DLP.	DLP	16:9	300	2 lens opt	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	8.8
SIM2 Domino 30-H	4000	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Ice-cool looks belie its red-hot performance.	DLP	16:9	300	1.8-2.4	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	5.0
SIM2 HT 300 E	6000	04.05/FT	★★★★★	Best projector over £4000 in Awards 2005.	DLP	16:9	250	1.8-2.4	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	5.8
Sony VPL-VW100	7000	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Stunning performance for the money.	LCD	16:9	300	1.16-1.98	●	●		●	●	●		●	19
ThemeScene H79	3000	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Detailed, vivid picture at a great price.	DLP	16:9	283	1.6-2.1	●	●		●	●	●	●		7.5
ThemeScene HD72i	1499	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive new budget design.	DLP	16:9	n/a	1.6-1.9	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	3.1
Toshiba MT400	1000	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Boasts class-leading performance for the money.	DLP	16:9	285	1.56-1.88	●	●		●	●	●	●		2.8
Toshiba MT700	1699	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Diverting, but it's up against tough competition.	DLP	16:9	300	1.3-1.8	●	●			●	●		●	4.5
ViewSonic PJ552	799	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers a sharp picture in spite of LCD flaws.	LCD	4:3	300	1.5-1.8	●	●	●	●	●	●			6.3
Yamaha DPX-1200	8000	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive projector - shame about the price.	DLP	16:9	200	1.0-1.6	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	13.8
Yamaha LPX-510	3500	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	User-friendly and would suit a small room.	LCD	16:9	300	1.35-2.03	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	4.8

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Digital TV tuners

Add more channels to any existing television

BUDGET Up to £400

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Freeview/Sky Recorder	RGB Scart out	RGB Scart in	Component out	Analogue out	Digital out	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (kg)
Bush DFTA1000 iDaptor	50	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Novel welcome addition to the market - Freeview in a small Scart connector.	F	●					2.6x7.5x10	0.9
Bush DFTA3	60	06.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Doesn't boast good enough picture performance or level of dependability to impress.	F	●	●				3x25x14	0.6
DigiFusion FVRT200	180	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Best Freeview PVR in Awards 2005. Startling image quality and great features.	F	●	●	●			36x24x5	2.3

DigiFusion FVRT200

Great piece of equipment – it's fitted with an 80GB hard disk recorder and a pair of built-in tuners, so you have some really flexible recording options. The picture quality is class-leading - images are well defined, and boast crisp edges that maintain their focus even on fast-moving objects. We can heartily recommend it.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
DVD & HARD-DISK RECORDERS
BEST FREEVIEW PVR
DIGIFUSION FVRT200

Ferguson FD1 PRISM	70	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	Cool looking and the picture is pretty good.	F						8x8x16	75
Goodmans GDB5	80	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Includes a DAB radio but the overall performance isn't up to the best.	F		●	●			9x40x30	2.2
Hauppauge WINTV HVR-900	75	07.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Plugs into your computer's USB port and transforms your PC into a TV.	F						n/a	n/a
Humax F2-FOX-T	69	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Combines impressive performance with a tidy and user-friendly design.	F		●	●	●	●	4x22x16	1.0
Humax PVR-8000T-80	149	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	The original 40GB has a much better picture than its 80GB successor.	F	●	●	●	●		6x37x26	2.7
Humax PVR-9200T	229	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Great value - superbly equipped, including a 160GB hard disk, and enjoyable to use.	F	●	●	●		●	7x38x28	3.7
Inverto IDL7000T	240	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Much to praise but the picture isn't quite good enough - includes an 80GB hard disk.	F	●	●	●	●	●	42x30x7	3.0
Nokia 221T	130	01.04/GT	★★★★★	The innovative design looks different but the Nokia has competitive performance.	F		●	●	●	●	13x25x28	1.05
Philips DTR320	60	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Decent performer at an attractive price - fully deserves a strong four stars.	F		●	●	●	●	5x17x26	n/a
Pioneer DBR-TF100	100	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Fine performance with a few extra frills for an affordable price.	F		●	●		●	5x26x19	1.1
Sagem 7280T	200	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Smartly styled, with an 80GB hard disk and it has Top Up TV compatibility.	F	●	●	●		●	32x23x5	1.7
Sagem ITD66	70	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Good pictures at a reasonable price mean this Sagen's definitely worth a look.	F		●	●	●	●	22x14x3.5	0.4
Sagem ITD72	60	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Competition is tight, though the feature count could mean it appeals to some.	F		●	●		●	4x22x14	4.0
Sky Sky+	99	10.04/GT	★★★★★	Best subscription PVR in Awards 2005. Watch and record satellite television.	S	●	●	●	●		7x38x24	4.5
Sony VTX-D800	100	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value - style, simplicity of use and a great picture, make this a fine box.	F		●	●	●	●	22x5x24	1.5
Topfield TF5800PVR	279	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Great spec - twin tuners and 160GB hard-drive recorder - let down by poor picture.	F	●	●		●	●	6x34x27	4.2

Video cables

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	Scart	Component	DVI-D	HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Directional	Add. cost, £/m
Atlas Element	60	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant cable and the image is rich and detail levels are high.			●			1.0	●					
Belkin Razorvision	199	01.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	Processes the incoming digital picture to enhances them - not good or cheap.	●	●	●	●	●	2.4	●	●				
Chord Co Component	99	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Image quality is excellent: details are handled well and colours are natural.			●			1.0	●				●	10
Chord Co Scart	109	01.02/FT	★★★★★	Superb Scart for composite video and audio - RGB version should be even better.		●				1.0	●					16
Chord Co Scart (RGB)	129	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Pricey and only justifiable in a high-quality system, but worth the money anyway.		●				1.0	●				●	10
Chord Co Silver Plus (HDMI)	80	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best digital video cable in Awards 2004. Great value for money.		●			●	1.5	●	●				
Chord Co Silver S-Video	60	05.02/FT	★★★★☆	One of the best S-Video cables around, but ensure the rest of your kit is up to it.	●	●				1.0	●	●			●	8
Clearer Audio Copper-line (HDMI)	50	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Displays good grip during violent motion, and wonderful skin tones.						1.0	●	●			●	10
Ecosse HDMI	129	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Longer length, but it leaves traces of noise on-screen - good detail doesn't save it.					●	5.0	●					
Ecosse Prisma	50	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Flexible and easy to handle, colours and overall contrast are very good.			●			1.0	●					
Gefen CAB-HDMI	40	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fine performer which manages to present a vivid and entertaining picture.					●	3	●					
Ixos XFV05-300	30	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	A cut above its other budget rivals but this DVI offering is only an average one.				●		3	●					5
Ixos XHT458 HDMI	80	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Fine buy as well as a rather desirable piece of kit - said to be 1080p video-ready.					●	1.0	●					
Ixos XHT601-150	40	03.04/GT	★★★★★	A superb cable with great images, but we'd go for the Award-winning XHT611.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHT611-075	40	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards 2003. Flat cable and sockets - brilliant picture and sound.		●				0.75	●					
Ixos XHT801-150	70	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Old-skool looker - its specialities are detail retrieval and picture stability.		●				1.0	●	●			●	
Ixos XHV601	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Light years better than freebie Scarts, but it is not a class leader.		●				1.5	●					
Ixos XHV704-300	50	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you need a three-metre run this well-made cable is an affordable solution.			●			3.0	●					
Ixos XHV804-100	70	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent fine detail even in complex scenes and impressive blacks.			●			1.0	●				●	
Ixos XHV904-100	100	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Vivid colours but rather overdone - clarity and sharpness suffer.			●			1.0	●	●				Inc
Kimber HDMI	93	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Reproduction of colours is bright and vivid without ever being brash.					●	1.0	●	●				Inc
Kimber Scart RGB	109	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Premium-quality cable at a premium price, but it's a stunning performer.		●				0.75	●				●	44
Lektropacks HCSL14	13.25	03.99/GT	★★★★★	Great value - looks great and sounds excellent with bags of muscularity.		●				1.5				●		
Molex DVI-D	9.50	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful, it offers decent performance. A fair starter buy, but no more.				●		2	●					
Monster DVI400	70	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Produces a terrifyingly good picture, with levels of detail and definition to die for.				●		1.0	●					
Monster HDMI400	130	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Overall performance is storming and it is a useful length.					●	4.0	●					
Monster M1000CV	160	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Not a component cable for every system but worthwhile in the right context.			●			1.0	●				●	
Monster THX RGB Scart	120	07.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Delivers good quality pictures but it is too expensive.		●				2.0	●	●				
Monster THX Ultra 1000	100	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great cable - contrast levels are excellent and colours are endearing.			●			1.5		●				
Nordost Optix Component	175	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. If you've got the right kit it delivers the goods.			●			1.0	●	●			●	60
Nordost Optix Video Super-S	136	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	Expensive but fabulous with outstanding contrast and superb edge definition.	●					1.0	●	●			●	40
Nordost Silver Screen	220	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Absolutely top-class performer - but the heavyweight price tag severely limits it.		●				1	●	●			●	50
Philex 26481H	15	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Cheap, solidly made and the performance is spot on. A great first upgrade.		●				1.5	●				●	

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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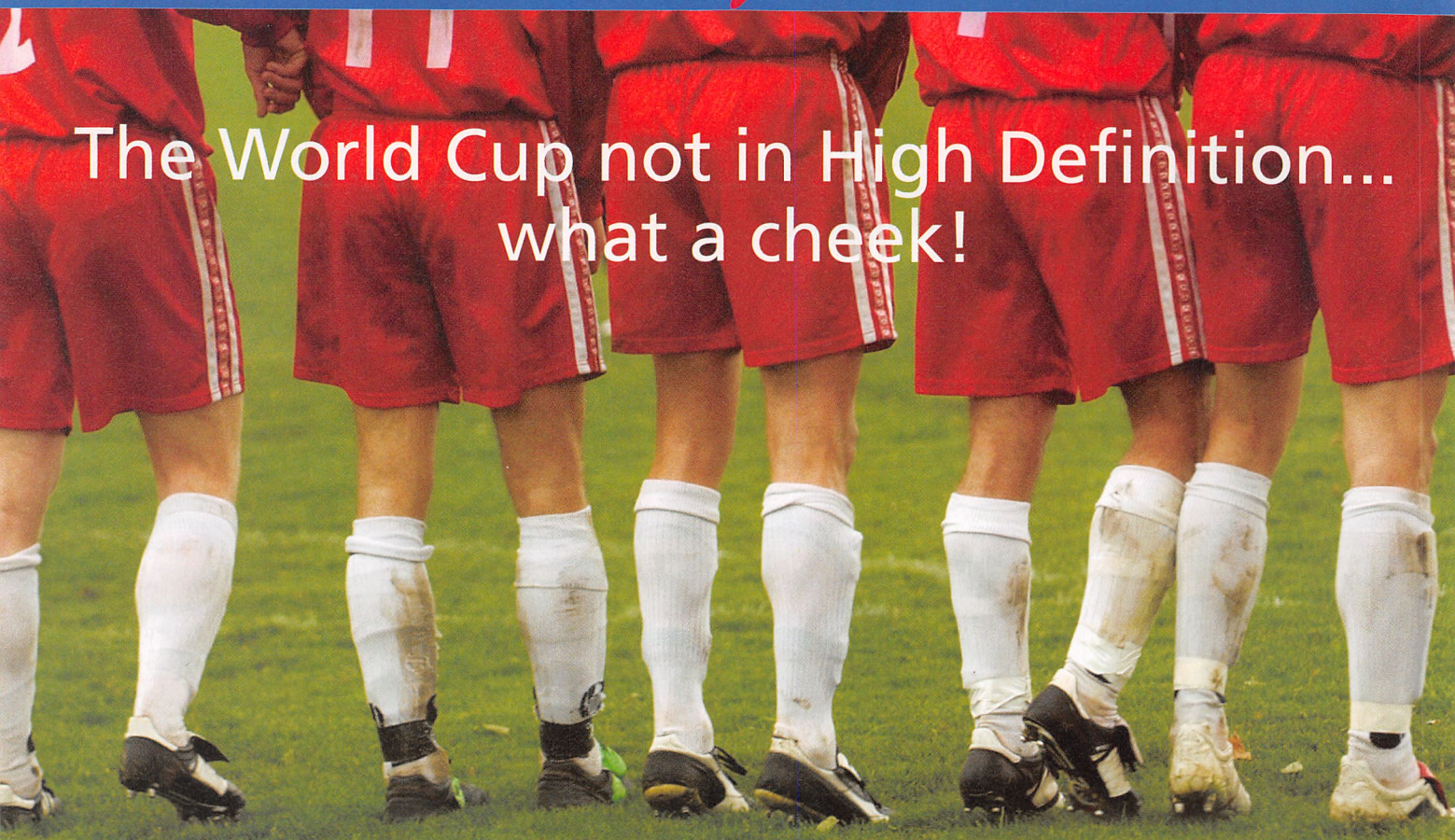

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Video cables continued...

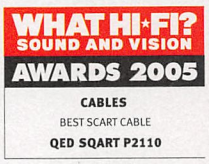
Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	TYPE: Scart	TYPE: Component	TYPE: DVI-D	TYPE: HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	CONDUCTOR: Directional	Add. cost, £/m
Philex Thor HDMI 5M	60	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Ideal with budget displays and DVD players - decent cable and fine value.				●	●	5	●					
Philex Thor RGB	50	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Picture and build quality that belies its price tag.			●			1.5	●				●	n/a
Philex Thor Scart	30	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Build and performance that belies its pricetag.		●				1.5	●					n/a
Profigold DVI PGM1415	190	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Industrial strength construction and great pictures with no noise - excellent value.				●		15	●					
Profigold PGV 1002	70	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Outperforms analogue connections but its superiority isn't crushing.				●	●	1.0	●					
Profigold PGV 1015	210	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well done Profigold for producing a poised, well-balanced cable at this length.					●	15	●					
Profigold PGV 6602 S-Video	15	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Decent colours and good edge definition - at this price it's a real steal.	●					1.0	●					
Profigold PGV332	37	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Cheap, and a step up from a freebie cable, but not as good as some around.			●			1.5	●					
Profigold PGV335	55	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Really accomplished and fantastic-value - colour balance and detail is excellent.			●			5.0						
Profigold PGV632	32	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Performance at a modest price - lets you adapt your TVs scart sockets to suit.	●	●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7000	45	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solidly constructed and capable, if not quite a front-runner in perfomance terms.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7392	25	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	A deft, natural way with colours and good sound from this affordable cable.		●				1.5	●					
Profigold PGV7393	30	09.01/FT	★★★☆☆	Uninspiring but a major step up from the freebie Scart slung in with your DVD.		●				1.0	●					
Profigold PGV782	30	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Sensible upgrade - impressive with fast moving action films and colours shine.		●				1.5	●					
QED P2110	30	05.04/FT	★★★★★	Best Scart cable in Awards 2005. Worth every penny.		●				1.0	●				●	

QED P2110

This cable won the Best Scart cable in 2004 and we haven't found a better bet since. The face-on plug makes it to easy for both installation and connection respectively. Not only does it look the business but it also does the business where it's needed: on-screen. It's cheap, convenient and a stellar performer.



QED Performance Sqart P4110	30	11.05/FT	★★★★★	RGB only, but prodigious value for money - fine detail and colours are natural.		●				1.0	●				●	10
QED Qunex HDMI-P	58	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best digital video cable in Awards 2005. Awesome detail (1m costs £50).					●	2.0	●					8
QED Qunex P-CV1 Component	45	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best component video cable in Awards 2005. Images full of life and detail.			●			1.0m	●					n/a
QED Qunex SR-CV1 Component	85	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Picture performance is brilliant and it's beautifully built, but it's a little pricey.			●			1.0	●					
QED Qunex SVS	60	05.02/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a fine performance, but not as vivid in brightness terms as some rivals.	●					1.0	●	●				
QED Signature 5	200	09.05/GT	★★★★★	It costs a lot of money but it fully justifies the expenditure.			●			1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV2110	50	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Convincing colours and excellent contrast make this the best Scart at the price.		●				1.0	●	●				
QED Sqart AV4110 (RGB)	50	09.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Video-only, the best picture quality in the test.		●				1.0	●				●	

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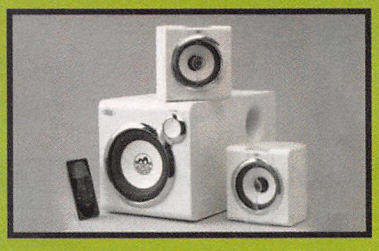
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★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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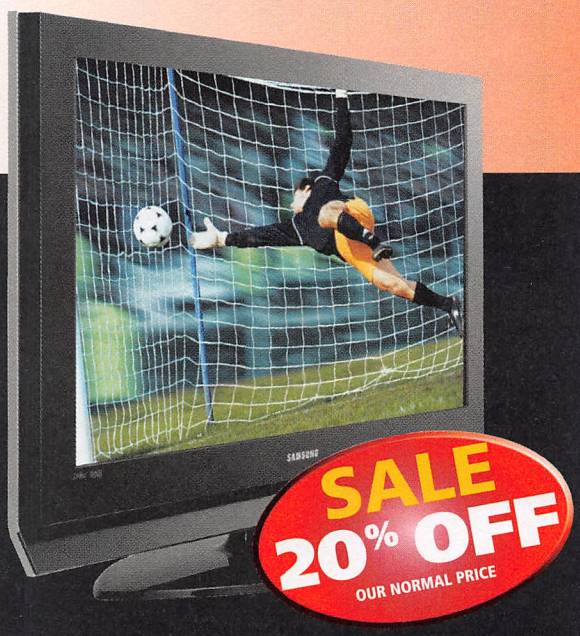

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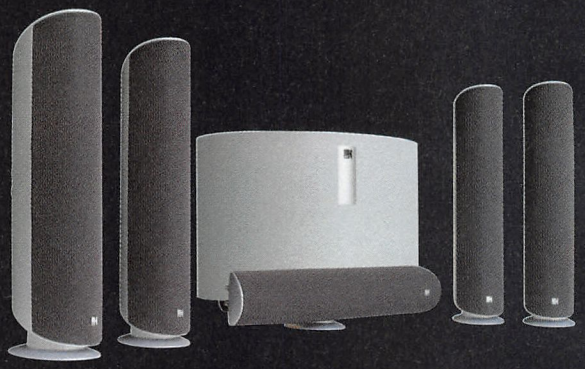
Denon has established an enviable reputation for the performance of both its hi-fi and home cinema products, winning numerous awards and accolades over the years. Its stylish systems have succeeded in becoming the benchmark by which all other are judged.

KEF

KHT 5005 AV SPEAKER PACKAGE

- Uni-Q Technology
- Silver Finish
- Package Comprses: PSW2500, HTS5001 & HTC5001
- Wall or Table Top Mounting Options



LIMITED STOCK

£795
WAS £995 SAVE £200

SAVE £200 OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE

REL QUAKE SUBWOOFER

(WOOD FINISH)

"Produces prodigious bass considering its diminutive stature."

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ OCTOBER 2002

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SALE £350
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BLACK BRITTEX FINISH ALSO AVAILABLE
£295.00
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AEGIS EVO 3B SPEAKER PACKAGE

"A great solution for those of you who take your hi-fi and home cinema seriously."

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LEADERS IN QUALITY HI-FI

EXPERTS IN HI-FI COMPONENTS AND SYSTEMS

SEVENOAKS
SOUND & VISION

Teac
REFERENCE 300DAB II

- System Comprises:
  T-H300DAB MkII DAB/AM/FM Tuner
  A-H300 MkII Amplifier
  PD-H300 MkII CD player
- Supports CD, CD-R/RW Discs
- 35W+35W RMS Output Power
- Silver Finish
- Full Function System Remote

£395
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OFF OUR NORMAL PRICE WHEN YOU BUY ALL 3 COMPONENTS

Arcam Solo plus Alto
FOR GREAT SOUNDING MUSIC

- Amazing Sound from an Integrated System
- With Exceptional Quality CD, FM and DAB Digital Radio
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WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CD PLAYERS
BEST CD PLAYER £1500-£2000
PRIMARE CD31

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
STEREO AMPLIFIERS
BEST STEREO AMPLIFIER £1500-£2000
PRIMARE I30

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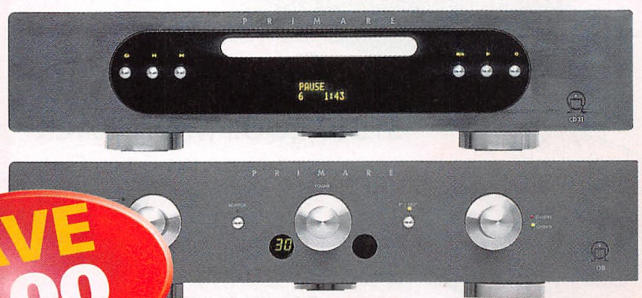
WAS £2990 SAVE £400



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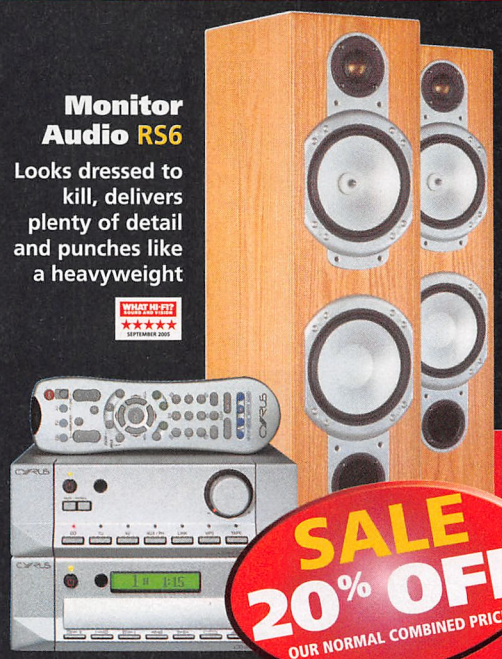
MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE

BUILDING SYSTEMS FOR YOUR LISTENING PLEASURE

MASSIVE SAVINGS

ON THESE SELECTED SYSTEMS FROM
CYRUS** & **MONITOR AUDIO



Monitor Audio RS6

Looks dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight

WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

SALE 20% OFF OUR NORMAL COMBINED PRICE

Cyrus CD8x CD Player, 8vs Amplifier Plus
Monitor Audio Silver RS8 Speakers

SALE 25% OFF OUR NORMAL COMBINED PRICE

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LIMITED STOCK

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Cyrus CD6s CD Player, 6vs Amplifier Plus
Monitor Audio Silver RS6 Speakers

"Astonishing performer for the money with the usual Cyrus advantage of easy upgradability and fine build"

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 PRODUCT OF THE YEAR CD PLAYERS CYRUS CD6s

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AEGIS EVO 3 SPEAKERS

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- Finish options Available
- 3-Way Design

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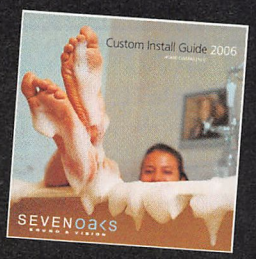

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Spread the cost of buying. Flexible finance options‡ are available on the majority of products we stock. ‡**Written details on request. Licensed credit brokers. Minimum balance £400. Subject to status.**

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- 403 KINGS ROAD

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- 14 PITTVILLE STREET

CRAWLEY 01293 510777
- 32 THE BOULEVARD

CROYDON 020 8665 1203
- 369-373 LONDON ROAD

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- 24 THE GREEN *OPEN SUNDAY*

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- 28 COWICK STREET

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- 73B NORTH STREET

HOLBORN 020 7837 7540
- 144-148 GRAYS INN ROAD

HULL 01482 587171
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- 43 FIFE ROAD

LEEDS 0113 245 2775
- 62 NORTH STREET

LEICESTER 0116 253 6567
- 10 LOSEBY LANE

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LOUGHTON 020 8532 0770 **NEW**
- 7-9 GOLDINGS HILL

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- 96 WEEK STREET

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NEWCASTLE 0191 221 2320
- 19 NEWGATE STREET

NORWICH 01603 767605
- 29-29A ST GILES STREET

NOTTINGHAM 0115 911 2121
- 597-599 MANSFIELD ROAD, SHERWOOD

OXFORD 01865 241773
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PIONEER DCS360 - LATEST
PANASONIC SCHT855 - SPECIAL
DENON DHT500SD - £379
DENON S101 - SPECIAL
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ALL WITH 4 YEAR WARRANTY
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PANASONIC
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TX32LXD60 - HD LCD
TH37PX60 TH37PX600
TH42PX60 TH42PX600
TH50PX60 TH50PX600
TH37PV500 TH65PV500
TH42PV500

DENON
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BEST DVD SYSTEM
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5 STAR RECEIVER
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BEST AMPLIFIER
DSPAX759 - LATEST
BEST HOME CINEMA HD RECEIVER
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Plasma & Projector VERY SPECIAL
BEST SOUND PROJECTOR
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5 STAR SOUND PROJECTOR
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BEST BUDGET HOME CINEMA SYSTEM
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AV59 - £249

SONY
5 STAR SEPARATES- BEST PRICES
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5 STAR MINIDISC PLAYER
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GoldRing GR2 - £199
ProJect Debut MK3 - Special
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ProJect XPRESSION - Special
ProJect XPERIENCE - Special
ProJect XPACK - Special

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2 Year Warranty on NAD Products
C320BEE - £179 - BEST HIFI AMP
C352 - £279 - AMP OF THE YEAR
C521BEE - £169 - BEST BUY CD PLAYER
C542 - £279 - 5 STAR CD PLAYER
C372 - £399 - BEST INTEGRATED AMP.

Pioneer
PDP436XDE - BEST HD PLASMA
PDD436SXE - ONE BODY PLASMA
DVR440 & 540 - LATEST DVD RECORDER
DV989Ai - BEST DVD PLAYER
VSXAX10Ai - BEST AMPLIFIER
VSXAX4Ai - 5 STAR RECEIVERS
2 Year Warranty on Pioneer AV Receivers

SPEAKER PACKAGES
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M-SHORT PREMIERE - £249
M-SHORT PREMIERE PLUS - £379
MISSION M-CUBE - £799
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YAMAHA YSP800 & YSP1000

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DENON AVR2805S - SPECIAL
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PIONEER VSXAX10Ai - REDUCED
SONY STRDG500 - £149
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YAMAHA DSPAX759SE - LATEST
YAMAHA RXV1600- Latest
YAMAHA RXV2600 - £849

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IXOS XHD608-100 - £39
QED QUNEX HDMI-P - £39
QED QUNEX PCV1 - £38
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32PF7521D 42PF9730
32PF9631D 42PF9831D
32PF9830D 42PF7521D
32PF9967D 42PF9631D
37PF5521D 50PF9967D

Video cables continued...

Essential extras to maximise the quality of your DVD player and other sources

BUDGET Up to £210/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: S-Video	TYPE: Scart	TYPE: Component	TYPE: DVI-D	TYPE: HDMI	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Directional	Add. cost, £/m
Supra AV3 Component	65	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Exemplary colour realism and three-dimensionality.			●			1.0	●					11
Supra AV6 (RGB)	80	04.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Movies benefit from an impressive depth of field.		●				1.0	●			●	●	13
Supra FS Scart	38	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the best budget Scarts we've seen for years.		●				1.0	●					
Supra HF100 DVI to HDMI	40	UGHD.05	★★★★★	Simple and very effective, this is a real value-for-money buy.				●	●	1.0	●				●	
Tech + Link Wires XS (HDMI)	50	02.06/FT	★★★★★	Useful length and great stability and definition.					●	2.0	●					
Tech + Link XS141	40	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Lack of image noise is amazing, blacks are superbly defined - a high-value buy.			●			1.0	●					
Tech + Link XS810 Scart	50	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail, black definition and depth of field - just a bit pricey.		●				1.0	●	●				
True Colours Ind. Taipan S-Video	55	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Sensibly priced, capable cable, with outstanding contrast and depth levels.	●					1.0	●					20
True Colours Ind. Taipan Scart	90	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	Pricey, but offers sensational performance, with first-rate colour and detail.		●				1.0	●	●				50
TST TV1731	35	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Good step up from basic freebie cables, with smooth colours and edge definition.			●			1.5	●					
TST TV8810-5	32	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully made and offers a very reasonable level of performance for the price.		●				0.5	●					
van den Hul Compolink	100	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Very fine component lead - generates striking depth of field and fine detail.		●	●			1.5	●	●			●	-
van den Hul HDMI	55	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Nothing threw this cable off balance - use if you can get away with one-metre.					●	1.0	●	●				
Vivanco Prowire Digital	40	03.99	★★★★☆	Reveals plenty of punch and detail, delivering fine pictures for the price.		●				1.5	●					
Vivanco ProWire S-Video	25	03.99	★★★★☆	Delivers a very good performance, with well-detailed and vibrant images.	●					5.0	●					
Vivanco Prowire SHQ7712	40	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Well made and has decent-quality Scart plugs - fine performance for the money.		●				1.2	●				●	
Wireworld Chroma 5 HDMI/DVI	60	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Very fine - pleasing colour balance and bags of details in the murkiest scenes.				●	●	1.0	●					
Wireworld Chroma 5 Scart	40	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Majors on depth of field, motion-tracking and good contrast.		●				1.0	●				●	
Wireworld Ultraviolet 5 HDMI	130	07.04/GT	★★★★★	An exceptional cable that will add significantly to your viewing experience.				●	●	1.0	●	●			●	30
Wireworld Ultrav. 5 HDMI+MDR	200	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Effective - connects a DVD player and separate media box, using the MDR cable.				●	●	2.0	●	●			●	-

Digital interconnects

Connect your digital kit with a superior lead

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Coaxial	Optical	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Phono term	XLR term	BNC term	Toslink term	Directional
Atlas Compass	50	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent dynamics, fine timing, rock-solid attack, and the tonal balance is spot-on.	●		1.0	8.5	●				●				
Black Rhodium First-Base Crystal	90	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Capable of a sound with punch and drive, and high detail resolution. But it's pricey.		●	1.0	7.0				●				●	
Black Rhodium Rhythm	25	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Tight and fast-sounding cable with crisp clarity - affordable with a great sound.	●		1.0	5.8	●	●			●				
Chord Company Optichord	45	03.99/GT	★★★★★	Delivers lots of detail enhancing separation, plus has an excellent sense of timing.		●	1.0	6				●				●	
Ecosse The Executive	45	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Lucid-sounding but it lacks the drive of the class best.	●		1.0	n/a	●				●				
Ecosse The Producer	21	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000. You won't get better interconnects for the money.	●		0.8		●				●				
Ixos XHD-608-100	50	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Best digital audio cable in Awards 2005.	●		1.0		●	●			●				●

Ixos XHD-608-100

This is the second year running this cable has won an Award. A good coaxial cable is still a vital cog in anyone's home cinema machinery and for the money, Ixos's XHD-608-100 is a highly talented upgrade. It will give your system a more muscular and detailed sound – a great buy, and our favourite coaxial cable.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST DIGITAL AUDIO CABLE
IXOS XHD-608-100

Nordost Moonglo II	179	09.02/GT	★★★★☆	Good but expensive. Consider if you're in possession of a very high-end system.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Nordost Moonglow Sl Shadow	368	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	There's no denying the MSS produces a fabulous sound, but it's expensive.	●		1.0		●	●			●	●	●		●
Profigold PGD4000	42	08.02/GT	★★★★☆	Well specified, weighty sounding cable. Higher frequencies are nicely resolved.	●		0.75		●				●				
Profigold PGD481	20	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Dynamics are particularly impressive for the price.	●		1.0		●				●				
QED Qunex OT (was Qnect)	30	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Good value interconnect - the presentation is smooth without being boring.		●	1	5				●				●	
Supra Trico	45	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain upgrade for almost any home cinema set-up.	●		1.0	8	●				●		●		●
Supra X-ZAC	60	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Supra X-ZAC is great for optical-only connections.		●	1.0	8				●				●	●
True Colours Industries Adder	100	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	Refined performer that's well balanced tonally - good but not a class leader.	●		1.0	7	●				●		●		●
van den Hul Optocoupler	55	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. This is one of the best optical links around.		●	1	7.5				●				●	

CD players

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Arcam DiVA CD73T	420	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £250-£500 in Awards 2004. Leading choice at this price.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Audio Analogue Primo CD	475	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Amiable performer, but the class-leaders point offer a step-up in quality.	●				●			●								Sl
Audiolab 8000CD	600	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Very fine player - open and dynamic-sounding with plenty of power on tap.	●				●	●		●			●			●	●	Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 540C V2	200	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Budget player that doesn't look or sound cheap.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Cambridge Audio Azur 640C V2	250	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best CD player under £500 in Awards 2005. Stellar performer.	●				●	●		●						●		2
Denon DCD-485	140	01.02/ST	★★★★☆	This Denon is full of character and an exciting listen - match with care.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bk
Exposure 2010s	599	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Great player - fabulous treble, great dynamics, and a weighty bottom end.	●				●	●		●							●	2
Harman-Kardon HD970	300	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Promises much, but doesn't follow through - it's a disappointment.	●				●			●	●	●			●	●	●	Bk
Inca Design Katana	600	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Up there with the best with its rich detail, musicality and sublime build.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Marantz CD5001	170	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Very fine player that works with all types of music.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●	●	2

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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CD players continued...

A dedicated player will maximise CD sound quality

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Intergrated	TYPE: Multidisc	TYPE: Transport	TYPE: DAC	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Coax digital out	Optical digital out	XLR out	RCA out	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Headphone out	HDCD	CD Text	Memory	Display off	Finishes
Marantz CD5400	150	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Remarkable player for the money, with superb sound, looks and feel.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Myryad Z110	500	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	This product lacks the magic of the company's established machines.	●				●			●						●	●	2
NAD C521BEE	200	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Maybe an old-timer but still sounds great.	●				●			●						●		2
NAD C542	330	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Maintains NAD's impressive run of affordable, quality separates.	●				●	●		●				●		●		Gr
Onkyo C-733	400	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Tested with the A-933 amplifier - sonically they can be bettered.	●					●		●						●	●	Sl
Pioneer PD-F1007	300	09.99/FT	★★★☆☆	Average sound but great for parties, pubs or the incredibly lazy.	●	●				●		●	●	●	●		●	●		Bk
Pioneer PD-F1009	250	11.00/GT	★★★★☆	Logical and fuss-free to program - a hard multiplayer to beat for sound.	●	●				●		●			●		●	●		Bk
Pioneer PD-F958	230	11.99/FT	★★★☆☆	It's easy to use, but the Pioneer's sound ultimately disappoints.	●	●				●		●			●		●	●		Bk
Rotel RCD 1072	595	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and a joy to use, but it lacks a little bit of sparkle.	●				●							●		●		Sl
Rotel RCD-02	380	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Punchy performer - bassheads will especially enjoy its tight delivery.	●				●			●				●		●		Sl
Sony CDP-XE370	100	02.06/GT	★★★★☆	Decent performer with clean, crisp sound - great value.																
Sony SCD-XE597(SACD)	150	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine player and it is worth a look if you like your music safe.	●					●		●			●			●		2
TEAC C-1D	240	08.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Respectable offering from Teac but unlikely to set hearts a-flutter.	●					●					●			●	●	Sl
Yamaha CDX-396	130	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Smooth, system-friendly player - will tame bright-sounding systems.	●					●		●						●	●	Bl
Yamaha CDX-496	190	01.02/ST	★★★☆☆	The Yamaha is a good machine for the cash with a relaxing, warm sound.	●					●		●			●			●	●	Bl

BUDGET £601 to £2000

Arcam DiVA CD192	850	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Sensational disc-spinner with bags of sonic appeal.	●				●	●		●					●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ CD36	1400	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	A disappointment despite a top-class technical specification.	●				●	●		●					●			Sl
Audia Flight CD Two	2000	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Glorious Italian listen - especially for fans of vocally indulgent tunes.	●				●		●	●								2
Audio Analogue Paganini	925	07.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Great looks with a fantastic remote control, but only average performance.	●				●			●								Sl
Audio Note DAC One 1x	900	09.00/FT	★★★★★	Superbly natural, this cracking DAC succeeds in giving CDs new life.				●	●			●	●							Sl
Copland CDA823	1750	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Lyrical and energetic - sounds a good deal more expensive than it is.	●				●	●	●	●				●	●		●	Sl
Creek CD50 Mk2	850	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Solid, smooth-sounding player with warmth and weight.	●				●	●		●						●		Sl
Cyrus CD6s	650	11.05/GT	★★★★★	CD player Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Astonishing performer.	●					●		●						●	●	2

Cyrus CD6s

Astonishing performer for the money – the old CD6 was superb but the new player is much better across the board. It sounds more authoritative, because the bass is just so much more powerful and solid than before. A belting player with the usual Cyrus advantages of easy upgradability and fine build.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CD PLAYERS
CYRUS CD6s

Cyrus CD8x	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best CD player £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005. Sensational detail.	●				●	●		●						●	●	2
Cyrus CD8x/PSX-R	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Pairing the CD8x with the PSX-R brings extra resolution and scale.	●				●	●		●						●	●	No
Cyrus DACX	1100	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Great DAC, which will improve on the sound of most CD players.				●		●	●	●	●	●						2
Densen B-400 Plus	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Handsome box with an up-front and energetic sound, loaded with detail.	●				●			●						●	●	2
Exposure Classic 22	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Very characterful sound, fast and confident - give it a thorough audition.	●				●	●		●					●		●	Sl
Inca Design Katana SE	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Special edition of the Katana - big and brawny and sounds much the same.	●				●	●	●	●				●		●	●	Sl
Marantz SA15S1	1100	UGSY.06	★★★★☆	SACD player that offers refinement and richness - fabulously built.	●				●	●		●			●		●		●	SL
Meridian G07	1595	06.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Plenty of substance, but the Meridian lacks the sparkle to really impress.	●				●	●		●						●	●	2
Monrio Asty Player	895	04.00/FT	★★★★★	Classy Italian product that offers a sophisticated and entertaining sound.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Moon Equinox	1950	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Class machine for those who plan long, indulgent listening sessions.	●				●			●						●	●	Bk
Myryad MXC6000	1400	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	The unruffled sound is truly impressive - full of finesse and polish.	●				●			●							●	2
Naim CD5i	825	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Remains a fine-sounding option in an incredibly competitive market.	●							●						●	●	Bk
Naim CD5x	1450	10.05/ST	★★★★☆	Quirky, appealing player with an involving, engaging sound.	●							●				●				Bk
Onkyo C-1VL	800	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	There are now far more capable players around for not much more money.	●				●	●		●						●	●	Sl

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Denon DV1400 Multi-format DVD E/Dem (1Yr G/tee)	(399.00)	£175.00
KEF HTS 5001 Spkrs inc Stands Ex/Dem (2Yr G/tee)	(496.00)	£329.00
KEF HTS 5001 Spkrs Silver Ex/Dem (2Yr G/tee)	(298.00)	£179.00
Linn Genki CD Player New (2 Yr G/tee)	(1100.00)	£769.00
Linn Ikemi CD Player New (2 Yr G/tee)	(2200.00)	£1495.00
Linn Ninka Speakers - Maple Ex/Dem (2Yr G/tee)	(1100.00)	£699.00
Naim Allae Speakers Cherry S/H (1Yr G/tee)	(2250.00)	£1495.00
Rotel RA02 Amplifier - Black Ex/Dem (2Yr G/tee)	(349.00)	£249.00
Velodyne SPL1000/2 Active Sub Ex/Dem(1Yr G/tee)	(899.00)	£499.00

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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37PF5521D	37" HD, Freeview LCD	With Table Stand	£1,199.99
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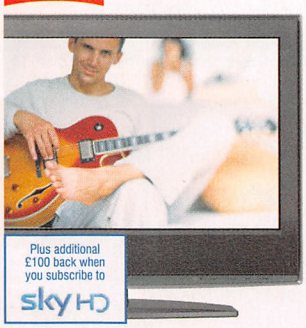
Freeview BRAVIA SONY



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Airy frame design featuring hidden speakers turns TV viewing into a new dimension with digital broadcasting capability, new DynaPix HD picture and exclusive sound features.

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TH37PX600CAB	37" HD, Freeview Plasma	Flr Stand/5 Year	DEAL
TH37PX600PED	37" HD, Freeview Plasma	Table Stnd/5 Year	DEAL
TH37PX600WALL	37" HD, Freeview Plasma	Wall Brak/5 Year	DEAL
TH42PX600CAB	42" HD, Freeview Plasma	Flr Stand/5 Year	DEAL
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KDL46S2010PACK	46" HD, Freeview LCD	Flr Stand/DVD Rec/5 Year	DEAL
KDL40V2000	40" HD, Freeview LCD	With Table Stand	DEAL
KDL40V2000PACK	40" HD, Freeview LCD	Flr Stand/DVD Rec/5 Year	DEAL
KDL46V2000	46" HD, Freeview LCD	With Table Stand	DEAL
KDL46V2000PACK	46" HD, Freeview LCD	Flr Stand/DVD Rec/5 Year	DEAL
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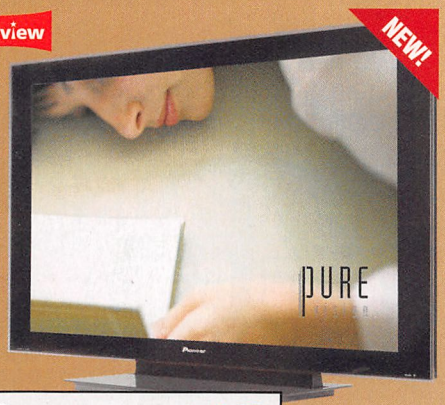

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TMMP £499.99

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Teac	MCDX10MKII	Mini Hifi System With Speakers	£149.99

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Hi SPEK

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Arcam	AVR350	7.1ch Rcvr + HDMI Upscale	15% Free Goods Offer	£1499.99
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DENON

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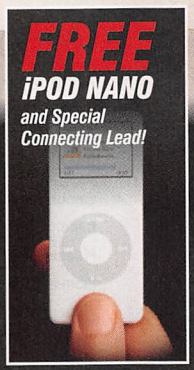

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Philips	PET1002	10.2" Portable DVD Player	CALL
Toshiba	SDP1700	7" Portable DVD Player	£189.99
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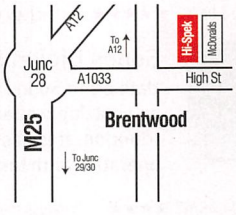

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BUDGET Up to £600																				
Orelle CD100evo2	1300	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Plenty of sonic prowess but looks a little pricey alongside some rivals.	●							●							●	Sl
Primare CD21	800	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Match with energetic, lively sounding kit for a successful system.	●				●	●		●					●			2
Primare CD31	1500	10.05/ST	★★★★★	Best CD player £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005. Sounds a treat.	●				●	●		●							●	Sl
Quad CD-P2	1000	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Challenges the class-leaders in every area - sounds refined and involving.	●					●		●	●	●				●	●	Sl
Quad CD-S	650	11.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Looks a class leader on paper but disappoints with an overly safe sound.	●					●		●						●	●	Sl
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1100	11.04/GT	★★★★★	A canny piece of kit and well worth the money - real class-contender.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Roksan Kandy Mk III	650	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Not bad by any means but at this price it now gets left in the shade.	●				●			●						●		6
Sugden Bijou CD Master	1299	11.01/FT	★★★★☆	Cute with plenty of weight and authority, but bass lines can sound slow.	●				●			●						●		Sl
Tube Technology Fusion CD64	1990	11.03/FT	★★★★★	It looks distinctive and sounds lovely - buy the tailor-made lead.	●				●	●		●	●	●			●	●	●	2
Unison Research Unico CD	1195	05.04/GT	★★★★☆	Gives you plenty of bang for your buck, but don't pair with bass-heavy kit.	●				●		●	●	●							St
BUDGET £2001 and over																				
Audionet ART V2	2400	01.04/FT	★★★★★	A big sound that allows long listening, not short on detail or dynamics.	●				●		●	●								2
Chord Electronics Choral One	2995	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great looking and superbly built - it sounds good too.	●				●			●						●		2
Denon DCD-SA1	5000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Pair with the PMA-SA1 amp and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●				●	●	●	●							●	Sl
Densen B-400XS	2600	01.06/GT	★★★★★	Appealing minimalist looks with clear and detailed presentation.	●				●	●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	2
Moon Andromeda	8995	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Awe-inspiring sonic performance, this is an absolutely outstanding player.	●				●			●	●		●				●	Sl
Moon Eclipse	5950	04.00/FT	★★★★☆	Very worthy machine that can be breathtaking when carefully partnered.	●				●		●	●	●					●	●	2
Naim CDS3/XPS2	7540	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best CD player over £2000 in Awards 2004. Fully justifies frightening price.	●							●				●		●	●	Bk
Naim CDX2	2800	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical entertainer of the highest order, and it is easily upgradeable.	●							●				●		●	●	Bk
Resolution Audio Opus 21	2850	06.04/FT	★★★★★	This is the best disc spinner we've seen anywhere near this price.	●						●	●	●					●	●	3
Sony SCD-XA9000ES (SACD)	2400	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	This CD/SACD player excels in many areas, and is solid in every sense.	●				●	●		●			●		●	●		2
Sugden Masterclass	2700	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb when combined with the Masterclass amplifier.	●				●			●	●					●		Sl
TEAC D-70	5000	12.03/FT	★★★★★	With the P-70 CD transport this is up there with the finest around.			●				●		●	●					●	Bk
TEAC P-70	5500	12.03/FT	★★★★★	P-70/D-70 combo - a contender for the best player in the world.			●		●	●	●	●	●	●					●	Bk

Recorders

Archive your favourite tunes with a recorder to suit your system

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	FORMATS: CD-R	FORMATS: CD-RW	FORMATS: Minidisc	FORMATS: Hard disk	INPUTS & OUTPUTS: Cassette	Coax digital in	Optical digital in	Line in	Coax digital out	Optical digital	Headphone out	Dolby	Dolby HXPro	Remote	No. of heads	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £1500																				
Acoustic Solutions SP150	150	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Amiable CD storage/player solution, especially for non-PC owners.				●								-		●	-	Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 640H	600	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	CD player, CD writer and a 160GB music server, plus useful features.	●	●		●				●	●	●						Sl
Denon CDR-W1500	450	02.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Twin-tray machine - it's too expensive, so can't compete with rivals.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●		2
Pioneer CT-S250	150	08.97	★★★★☆	Sensibly-priced and capable of good results. Cheaper rivals.					●			●				B/C			2	Bk
Pioneer CT-W606DR (Dual)	200	08.01/GT	★★★★☆	Good budget buy for making faithful tape-to-tape copies.					●			●			●	B/C	●		2	Bk
Pioneer CT-W806DR (Dual)	300	10.97	★★★★☆	Highly recommended in Awards 1997. Great fun and innovative.					●		●	●				B/C	●		2	
Pioneer MJ-D508	200	07.02/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Great for recording pop music.			●			●	●	●	●		●	-			-	Bk
Pioneer PDR-609	280	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Product of the Year in Awards '02. Good, but rivals have overtaken.	●	●				●	●	●	●	●	●	-			-	Bk
Sony MDS-JE480	130	09.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable deck for the money - does a good job of recording.			●				●	●								2
TEAC V-1050	180	09.98	★★★★★	Great price - everything a home recording fan could ask for.					●						●	B/C	●		3	Bk
Yamaha CDR-HD1500	600	11.05/FT	★★★★★	A neat way of getting into hard-disk music for non-PC owners.	●	●		●		●	●	●	●	●	●					Bk
Yamaha KX-393	160	09.98	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2001. Still produces excellent results.					●			●			●	B/C	●		2	Bk
Yamaha KX-580SE	250	08.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Quality copies and good sound.					●			●			●	B/C/S	●		2	Bk

Music servers

One smart hard-drive box to hold all your tunes and fill your home with music

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	RECORDING: Capacity (GB)	RECORDING: Max (GB)	RECORDING: Uncompressed	RECORDING: MP3	RECORDING: Max MP3 data rate	INPUTS: Coaxial	INPUTS: Optical	INPUTS: Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	OUTPUTS: Optical	OUTPUTS: Line	OUTPUTS: Zones	Wireless built-in
BUDGET Up to £3000																	
Cyrus Linkserver Solo	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Probably the best-sounding system of its kind, but it's expensive.	80	800	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	1	
Hermstedt Hifidelio Pro	800	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Cracking music server, and an impressive debut for Hermstedt.	160		●	●	320			●	●	●	●	5	●
Philips WACS700	600	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	Terrific - makes multiroom audio a real possibility even on a budget.	40			●	320			●				5	●
Sonos Digital Music System	1159	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005. A work of genius.	-	-			-			●			●	32	●

Sonos Digital Music System

Hats off to Sonos for a producing a product that genuinely breaks the mould – it's an amazingly effective combination of wireless music routing and multiroom distribution. It is easy to install and even easier to use – a truly seamless wireless operation with terrific sound quality. The hottest thing to hit hi-fi in years.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
TECHNOLOGY
BEST BUY
SONOS DIGITAL MUSIC SYSTEM

Yamaha MusicCAST MCX2000	2500	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	Wireless multiroom system - ideal system for hi-fi buffs.	160	2000	●	●	320	●	●	●	●	●	●	8	●

Subscribe now 08456 777813

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Music server clients

Link with a music server and deliver tunes to every room in the house

BUDGET Up to £1,000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	OUTPUTS: Coaxial	Optical	Line	Built-in amp	Tuner FM/AM	Wireless built-in
Apple AirPort Express	89	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	Technology Product of the Year in Awards 2004.					●	●			●
Opus Technologies Opus System	5740	UGHF/03	★★★★★	Fine sound from this fairly easy to install multi-room solution - tested with the Marantz DH9300.			●			●	●	●	●
Pinnacle Showcenter	200	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Wirelessly sends video content such as MPEG2 and DivX films from your PC to TV.				●	●	●			●
Slim Devices Squeezebox 3	230	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Allows you to search and play music stored on your computer upstairs, downstairs on your hi-fi.				●	●	●			●
Sonneteer Bardthree	500	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Super-simple, non-compressed wireless music delivery system - sounds very good.							●		●
Sonneteer BardUSB	240	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Wirelessly sends music held on a computer to your hi-fi and doesn't forget good sound.			●			●			●

Apple AirPort Express

The AirPort Express was the winner of our first ever Technology Product of the Year Award in 2004. We honoured this innocuous little gadget because it's the missing link between your computer and your hi-fi. Play any MP3 file on your Wi-Fi-enabled computer and it's wirelessly transmitted to your hi-fi via AirPort – genius!

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TECHNOLOGY
APPLE AIRPORT EXPRESS

Turntables

Turntables still offer fantastic sound quality and awesome value-for-money

BUDGET Up to £14000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SPEEDS: 33 ⅓ rpm	45 rpm	78 rpm	Elec spd change	Man. operation	Auto operation	Semi-auto op.	Tonearm incl.	Cartridge incl.	Belt drive	Direct drive	Suspension	Finishes
Audio Note TT1/Arm 1/IQ1	900	11.01/ST	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Affordable, well built and sounds great.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+I/Q1	1417	08.01/FT	★★★★☆	You'll need the £2499 transformer, but you'll be rewarded with superb sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Audio Note TT2+Arm 2+IQ3	1600	05.03/GT	★★★★☆	Well engineered, versatile deck - sounds solid with any kind of recording.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Avid Acutus	6000	10.99/FT	★★★★★	This steel wheel cruises effortlessly through everything from jazz to rock.	●	●			●					●		●	2
Avid Diva package	1748	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and delivers composed, informative sound.	●	●		●	●			●	●	●		●	Bk
Bush MTT1	50	02.96/FT	★★★★★	Build quality is lacking but the mini-sized Bush manages to astound sonically.	●	●					●	●		●			Bk
Clearaudio Ambient	4040	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Beautifully built, and a joy to hear. Tested with Satisfy arm and Concerto cartridge.	●	●		●	●					●			Wd/Al
Clearaudio Champion L1	1365	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Combines stunning aesthetics with great sound - well worth an audition.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr
Clearaudio Emotion package	690	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Turntable Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Thrilling dynamics.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Ac
Clearaudio Master Ref/TQ-I	12610	08.01	★★★★★	For those who have the money and the desire this is one of the very best.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Acr
Goldring GR1/Elektra	140	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Basic looks, but produces a lively, forward and engaging sound.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Goldring GR2/1012GX	265	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Best turntable £150-£500 in Awards 2005. Detailed and rich sounding delivery.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk
Linn Sondek LP12/Lingo	2300	Awd94/FT	★★★★★	Best turntable in Awards 1994 - has a warmth and faithfulness few can match.	●	●		●	●					●		●	5
Michell Gyrodec SE	940	05.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Class-leading, few rivals get near its style or sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Sl
Michell Orbe SE	2116	06.01/GT	★★★★★	Big on bass, the Orbe combines striking looks with absolutely stunning sound.	●	●			●					●		●	Bk
Michell TecnoDec+HR pow sup	890	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Sounds wonderfully musical and impressively revealing, and is simple to set up.	●	●			●					●			Bk
Michell TecnoDec/Rega RB250	700	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	Understated looks and generous, friendly sound - it will never disgrace itself.	●	●		●	●			●		●			Bk
Ministry of Sound TT1100	80	04.06/FT	★★★★☆	Looks preposterous but under the bling is a capable turntable trying to get out.	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		●	Sl
Origin Live Aurora	970	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Tough setup, but a stellar performer with a wonderfully realistic presentation.	●	●		●	●					●			2
Origin Live Aurora Gold	1470	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	A great value deck that delivers a strong performance at a competitive price.	●	●		●	●					●		●	2
Origin Live Sovereign	3850	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Sublime - expensive but it sounds better than CD players anywhere near this price.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Bk
Pro-ject 1 Xpression	250	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great-value deck and sounds remarkable.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			Gry
Pro-ject 2 Xperience	550	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Laid-back and relaxed performer - ideal for longer-listening sessions.	●	●			●			●		●			Pers
Pro-ject 2 Xperience X-Pack	650	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Adding an Ortofon Rondo Red cartridge and speed box makes this great value.	●	●		●	●			●	●	●			Pers
Pro-ject Debut III Phono SB	225	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Award-winning turntable with a built-in phono stage - simple but effective.	●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●			2
Pro-ject Debut III/Ortofon OM5E	130	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable under £150 in Awards 2005. Incredible value.	●	●	●		●			●	●	●			9
Pro-ject Debut MKIII E	210	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	Capable and easy to use - the platter stops and the arm lifts at the end of the side.	●	●		●		●		●	●	●			2
Pro-ject Perspective	750	07.04/GT	★★★★☆	An impressive option, despite a lot of strong competition at this price-point.	●	●		●	●			●		●		●	Ac
Pro-ject RPM 6 SB	500	12.03/FT	★★★★☆	An added speed box to the RPM 6 SB results in a fine-sounding, user-friendly deck.	●	●	●	●	●			●		●			Bk
Pro-ject RPM5	400	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Sheer musicality is the major strength of this keenly priced turntable.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Grey
Pro-ject RPM9X	1000	04.04/FT	★★★★☆	Very good and if you enjoy a big, bold performance, it's really exceptional.	●	●			●			●		●			2
Rega P3	298	08.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2001. The finesse of decks that cost twice as much.	●	●			●			●		●			8
Reson Rota 1/Reson Reta/Etile	3100	05.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific if you buy for your ears rather than your eyes - precise and punchy.	●				●			●	●	●			Ac
Roksan Radius 5 (wood finish)	750	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer that hardly puts a foot wrong. Deserves to be on the audition list.	●	●			●			●		●			3
Roksan Radius 5/Nima arm	850	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Pretty and effective, it sounds a treat - resolves even the densest detail.	●	●			●			●		●		●	Ac
SOTA Comet Sup/RB300/Plat	650	11.01/ST	★★★☆☆	Offers an attractive sonic performance, but finish and cosmetics are below par.	●	●			●			●	●	●		●	Bk
SOTA Millennia	4750	05.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fabulous-sounding deck that brings out the magic of any LP collection.	●	●		●	●					●		●	Bk
Sound By Design Quasar LE/CG	3990	08.97	★★★★☆	An unusual approach to turntable design, but one which works really well.	●	●			●					●		●	Go
Technics SL1210 MK5G	550	05.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Bomb-proof DJ deck, but it loses out on a strictly sound-per-pound basis.	●	●		●	●			●	●		●		Gy
VPI HW-19 Junior	550	03.98/GT	★★★★★	A truly involving listen and peerless at this price. Includes a Rega RB300 arm.	●	●			●			●		●			Bk
Wilson Benesch The Full Circle	2100	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Best turntable £1000-£3000 in Awards 2005. Digs up plenty of detail.	●	●			●			●	●	●			Bk

Clearaudio Emotion package

Last year's Product of the Year continues to thrill and delight every time we listen to it. Sonically refined and exciting, the Emotion Package is rhythmically impeccable, and visually stimulating.Tested with the very capable Satisfy tonearm and Aurum Classics Wood cartridge – cracking value for money.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
TURNTABLES
CLEARAUDIO EMOTION PACKAGE

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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"THE CHEAPEST THERE IS"
- Q MAGAZINE

HEAVENLY HI-FI BARGAINS!

KEF CRESTA 10

100 WPC

BOOKSHELF SPEAKERS

KEF have a long held reputation for speaker excellence and, with the KEF Cresta 10, it's not hard to see why. TSP £199.95

SAVE £150 BRAND NEW BOXED **£49.95** PER PAIR

Cambridge Audio A1

30 WPC

AMPLIFIERS

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Nov '04

"A bargain piece of hi-fi with a magic all of its own." - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £99.95

SAVE £20 BRAND NEW BOXED **£79.95**

marantz PM4400

30 WPC

Remote Control

AMPLIFIERS

Authoritative yet incredibly musical, the Marantz is at home with rock as it is with classical. TSP £179.95

SAVE £80 BRAND NEW BOXED **£99.95**

marantz CD5400

Remote Control

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Feb '04

CD PLAYERS

"The CD5400 is an entry-level model but looks, feels and sounds anything but...The backbone of the Marantz's impressive delivery is the level of detail it uncovers." - What Hi-Fi? S & V magazine. TSP £149.95

SAVE £30 BRAND NEW BOXED **£109.95**

TEAC CR-H230

Remote Control

MINI STEREO SYSTEMS

Teac are known as making some of the finest music systems, and the CR-H230 is no exception. TSP £249.95

SAVE £130 BRAND NEW BOXED **£119.95**

Cambridge Audio AZUR 540C v.2

Remote Control

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Feb '06

CD PLAYERS

"We're sure it can't be bettered for the money." - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. Available in silver & black
Also available Cambridge Audio 640C v.2 for only £249.95

AMAZING VALUE! BRAND NEW BOXED **£199.95**

marantz & Wharfedale SUPER SYSTEM!

A **CD PLAYER: marantz** CD5001
"The Marantz CD player is well decked out"" - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £169.95
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Jan '06

B **AMPLIFIER: marantz** PM4001
The PM4001 has the blend of features, build and sound quality that has made Marantz so successful. TSP £179.95 — 65 WPC
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Jan '06

C **SPEAKERS: Wharfedale** 9.1
"These are ridiculously good speakers at this budget price level" - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £179.95 — 100 WPC
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Feb '06

These two Marantz components components were part of a 'Best Buy' winning system, and the Wharfedale speakers have won loads of praise, too. Put these bits of kit together, and you have a stunning system. SYSTEM TSP £529.85

SYSTEMS

SAVE £130

£399.95

BRAND NEW BOXED

WHAT HI-FI BEST BUDGET SYSTEM

Cambridge Audio & MORDAUNT-SHORT SYSTEM MEGADEAL!

100 WPC

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Feb '06

1 **CD PLAYER: Cambridge Audio** AZUR 640C v.2
"Details levels are exceptional for the money." - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £249.95
Available in silver & black.
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

2 **AMPLIFIER: Cambridge Audio** AZUR 640A
"Offering finesse and clout in equal measure." - What Hi-Fi? S&V magazine. TSP £249.95 — 65 WPC
Available in silver & black.
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ Jun '04
Hi-Fi World ●●●●●
BEST BUY HI-FI CHOICE

Bring in this ad, buy this CD and amplifier together & get these fantastic Mordaunt Short 902i speakers worth £150 for free!

Take two multi Best Buy winning products and team them up with a top-notch pair of speakers for stunning stereo sound. These classy separates are what your living room or bedroom have been crying out for! SYSTEM TSP £649.85

SYSTEMS

SAVE £150

£499.95

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PRODUCTS FROM £1001 - £3000	£50
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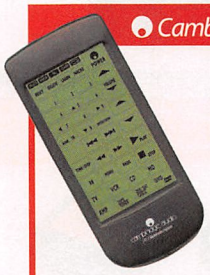
- All that we ask is that the product be brand new and boxed, and in stock there and then.
- We will pricebeat against other web retailers [including next day P&P when products can't be collected] as long as we can verify stocks via a UK phone number.
- Price Beat on plasma and LCD [32" and above] applies only when the price of a 3-year 'at home' warranty is added to both theirs and ours.

...HURRY!

WE WILL PAY YOUR PARKING...
SIMPLY ASK IN-STORE

HUMONGOUS HOME CINEMA DEALS!

Cambridge Audio M1+



WHAT HI-FI? ★★★★★ Jan '05
T3 BEST BUY

Replace up to 8 remote controls with this award winning gadget. The screen is backlit and can be configured to your exact requirement "For all your remote needs."- What Hi-fi? Sound and Vision magazine. TSP £79.95

REMOTES

SAVE £50 BRAND NEW BOXED **£29.95**

HITACHI VTFX540

Quite simply this is our best NICAM VCR deal ever! The Hitachi VTFX540 has the kind of specification and quality of performance that you'd usually associate with a machine costing at least three times as much. TSP £59.95

NICAM VCRS

SAVE £20 BRAND NEW BOXED **£39.95**

TOSHIBA SD360

For a truly class leading DVD player, at a fantastic price, the SD360 from Toshiba is well worth a look. Coming as standard with an HDMI output the SD360 offers the latest and best quality, digital connection. In addition to this the player will also play DivX discs as well as the more usual MP3 MPEG4 and JPEG. TSP £99.95

DVD PLAYERS

SAVE £30 BRAND NEW BOXED **£69.95**

TANNOY FX5.1

5.1 SPEAKER PACKAGE INCLUDES ACTIVE SUB

What Video widescreen TV BEST BUY

"The verdict? Superb." - What Video magazine. TSP £479.95

SPEAKER PACKAGES

SAVE £330 BRAND NEW BOXED **£149.95**

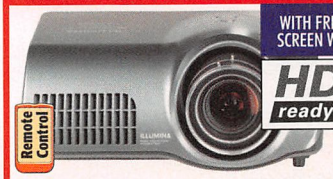
SONY RCDW100

This has to be the home recorder's dream machine! Featuring a CD player and separate recorder in a single box, the RCDW100 makes light work of recording tasks. A top class recorder at a bargain price! TSP £249.95

AUDIO RECORDERS

SAVE £70 BRAND NEW BOXED **£179.95**

HITACHI PJTX200



WITH FREE MATCHING SCREEN WORTH £99.95

HD ready

What Video widescreen TV BEST BUY
HOME CINEMA BEST BUY

"An irresistible projection proposition" - What Video magazine. TSP £1499.95

PROJECTORS

SAVE £500 BRAND NEW BOXED **£999.95**

SHARP LC26P50

INCLUDING FREE SHARP DESK TOP STAND

Featuring the latest advances in LCD screen technology, the LC26P50E boasts a picture that is sharper than ever before. TSP £799.95
Some may be ex-display at this price

LCD TVS

SAVE £400
£399.95
LAST FEW TO CLEAR

LG RZ32LZ55

INCLUDING FREE LG DESK TOP STAND

Already well-established as a leader in LCD TVs, LG have raised the bar higher with their new RZ32LZ55 and produced another class leader. TSP £1499.95

LCD TVS

SAVE £800
£699.95
BRAND NEW BOXED

HITACHI 37LD6600

INCLUDING FREE HITACHI DESK TOP STAND

With a string of awards to their name, Hitachi is now regarded as one of the premium names in flat screen TVs. It's not hard to see why! TSP £1999.95

LCD TVS

SAVE £800
£1199.95
LAST FEW TO CLEAR

Pioneer PDP436FDE

INCLUDING FREE PIONEER SPEAKERS & STAND WORTH £300 AND AV MEDIA BOX/TUNER

The Pioneer PDP436FDE boasts stunning High-Definition picture quality at an amazing price! TSP £3299.95

PLASMA TVS

SAVE £1500
£1799.95
LAST FEW TO CLEAR

CALL FOR NATIONWIDE STORE DETAILS ON: **0845 900 1230** OR CHECK OUT:

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The UK's Hi-Fi, home cinema & flat panel TV specialists!

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The mail order home cinema accessory specialist

Multi-media Format Converters (inc. HDTV)

Perfect integration between different AV sources and LCD/Plasma screens and also PC sources and normal TV screens.

Analogue to Analogue

CSY-2100 (Presenter3) Scart RGB to Component	£75.00
CRS-2000 Scart RGB to S Video+CV+Stereo	£50.00
CM-345SG Scart RGB to XGA with PC bypass	£125.00
CM-347ST Scart RGB+CV+SV to PC/HDTV	£160.00
CM-390 Video Scaler box	£140.00
CM-345T (Presenter2) Video to XGA + TV tuner/PIP	£149.00
CHD-380 PC/HDTV to Video scan converter	£350.00
CPT-380 RGB PC to CV/SV/RGB/YUV converter	£179.00
CMT-7 Multi format converter	£175.00
USB-205 Video + Audio to USB2.0 grabber	£75.00
CSC-200RS Magic View Video Scaler	£350.00
MHD-2 High-quality TV Tuner/Scaler/Switcher	£525.00

CM-390

CM-345SG

Analogue to Digital

CP-261D DVI to RGBHV/Component	£140.00
CP-261H HDMI to RGBHV/Component	£150.00
CM-348ST CV, SV, Scart RGB to DVI	£195.00
CP-252 VGA to DVI-I Scaler	£230.00
CM-391 Video scaler with DVI out	£175.00
CM-392 Video scaler with HDMI out	£199.00

CSY-2100

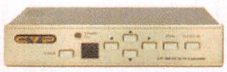
Digital to Digital

CP-267 HDMI to DVI-I + Audio	£175.00
CP-268 DVI + Audio to HDMI	£175.00

USB-205

Digital to Analogue – update screens to HD

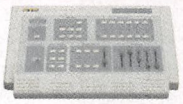
VisionFC1 DVI to VGA Scaler/Converter	£230.00
VisionFC2 DVI-I to DVI-I Scaler	£259.00
VisionFC3 DVI to PC/HD component	£120.00
VisionFC4 HDMI to PC/HD component + Audio	£155.00


CHD-380

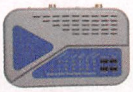
General AV products

An exciting range of high tech Plug and Play pieces of kit - ideal for improving picture quality, copying videos and DVDs, and watching SKY in your bathroom!

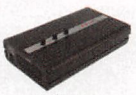
CMX-07 Real Time Video Mixer - add stunning video effects to your movies	£499.00
CPT-370 Mix and convert PC text and images with your camcorder movies	£160.00
W5LCD Watch SKY, DVD, VCR wirelessly round your home on this precision 5" LCD screen	£149.00
CTB-100 Create high quality video and DVD backups with this compact Time Base Corrector	£165.00
Creator Composite video to Scart RGB converter - ideal for backing up your old videos onto DVD disc	£79.00
Creator+ Scart RGB colour corrector/stabilizer - great for backing up between DVD player/recorder	£99.00
CIP-2 (SC) Watch 2 pictures on one TV screen - Picture in Picture (2 versions available)	from £120.00


CMX-07

W5LCD


CTB-100

Creator


Creator+

CIP-2

Switchers

Allowing multiple input selection from DVD, Video, Games consoles, etc. into all the latest TVs, Plasmas, LCDs, etc.

CDVI-31 3 in - 1 out DVI		£125.00
CDVI-31 4 in - 1 out DVI		£150.00
CDVI-61 6 in - 1 out DVI		£175.00
CDVI-81 8 in - 1 out DVI		£200.00
CHDMI-31 3 in - 1 out HDMI		£125.00
CHDMI-31 4 in - 1 out HDMI		£150.00
CHDMI-61 6 in - 1 out HDMI		£175.00
CHDMI-81 8 in - 1 out HDMI		£200.00
CHDD-41AR 4 in - 1 out YUV	(RS232)	£125.00
CPCD-41AR 4 in - 1 out PC (15d)	(RS232)	£120.00
CVSD-41AR 4 in - 1 out CV/SV	(RS232)	£75.00
CVD-1000 4 in - 4 out CV+St		£59.00
Trilogy1 Multi Scart Control centre		£69.00
Trilogy2 3 in - 1 out Auto RGB scart		£39.00
Trilogy3 2 in - 1 out Auto RGB scart		£29.00

CDVI-31

Trilogy2

Trilogy3

Trilogy1

World system video converters

View and Record NTSC / PAL / SECAM videos

ADC660 Multi-system video converter	£110.00
CDM-600 Multi system with auto detect	£175.00
CDM-630 Palm sized high quality	£299.00
CDM-640 Multi format + VGA out	£525.00
CDM-680 Multi-system + TBS Frame sync	£499.00

CDM-630

Audio/video over CAT5

Send a full range of AV signals over long distances using low cost CAT5 cable.

MN50000 Composite Video	£25.00
MN50001 Stereo+Video	£57.00
MN50002 RGB (sync on green)	£79.00
MN500010 VGA	£69.00
MN500012 2 x Video+Stereo	£60.00
MN500016 S video	£25.00
MN500017 Stereo + S video	£76.00
MN500019 Analogue Audio	£25.00
MN500020 Digital Audio	£25.00
MN500021 Component Video	£25.00
MN500025 Mono XLR	£36.00
MN500032 Quad Video	£60.00
MN500033 Quad Audio	£60.00
MN500050 Component +DA	£69.00
MN500060 Scart AV	£75.00

MN50002

MN50007

MN500022

MN50000

Distribution amplifiers

Connect all the latest HD-ready equipment and get the most stunning pictures!

CDVI-2 2 way DVI	£125.00
CDVI-4 4 way DVI	£150.00
CDVI-8 8 way DVI	£TBA
CHDD-3A 3 way HD/Component + Stereo	£99.00
CHDMI-4 4 way HDMI	£199.00
CHDMI-8 8 way HDMI	£340.00
CPCD-3A 3 way PC (UXGA) + Stereo	£89.00
CVSD-3A 3 way CV+SV+Stereo	£69.00
SC-AMP2 2 way Scart RGB	£29.00
SC-AMP3 10way Scart RGB	£175.00

CVSD-3A

CPCD-3A

CHDMI-4

CHDD-3A

SC-AMP3

Cables and connections

Connect all the latest HiD ready equipment and get the most stunning pictures

DVI-D to DVI-D 18pin single link
1, 3, 5, 10, 15 metres
DVI-D to DVI-D 24pin dual link
1, 3, 5, 10, 15 metres
DVI-D to HDMI 18pin single link
1, 3, 5 metres
HDMI to HDMI
1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 metres

HDMI to DVI-D adaptors
DVI-D to HDMI adaptors
DVI-I to VGA adaptors
HDMI couplers
M1 adaptors

NEW! DVI / HDMI Repeaters & Equalisers
For extending and sending loss free signals over long distance

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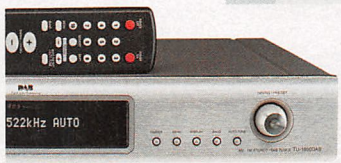
Tuners & portable radios

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions Portal 1 (port)	50	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Great budget value - simple, smart and effective.	●					0				Sl
Acoustic Solutions Portal 2 (port)	80	08.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Looks pretty but the sound is only average.		●				6				Sl
Acoustic Solutions SP111	100	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	If you can't afford to spend more on a hybrid tuner, this is an attractive option.	●	●				4	●	●	●	Sl
Alba TRDAB2820 (portable)	50	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cracking build quality coupled with good connectivity and sound.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Alba TRDAB2830 (portable)	40	02.06/FT	★★★☆☆	If you are after a cheap DAB/FM portable, you could do worse than investigate this.	●	●				10				Sl
Arcam DiVA DT91	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	All virtue and no vice, a no-brainer for Arcam fans, but it comes at a hefty price.	●	●				16	●		●	Sl
Arcam DiVA T61	230	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine tuner with a smooth and generous sound. But it faces tough competition.		●	●			30	●	●		2
B&O Beosound 3(port)	436	05.06/FT	★★★☆☆	One for fans of both design and sound, but price creates an exclusive fanclub.		●				99				Sl
BostonRecepter Radio (port)	130	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	A high-quality clock radio which delivers surprising bass depth, well worth an audition.		●	●			20				3
BT Aviator (portable)	95	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features including 10 min record facility - but the sound doesn't inspire.	●	●				10				Bk/Sl
Bush PSDAB2003 (handheld)	100	07.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Cheap and decent personal with sporting appeal, but it can't match the best..	●					10				Blu
Bush TR2004DAB (portable)	80	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Not without flaws, but the impressive sound marks it out at this price-point.	●	●				10	●			Sl
Cambridge Audio Azur 640T	200	Awd04/FT	★★★★☆	Decent piece of kit to top off the Azur range - bold and expressive performance.	●	●				20	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Audio DAB300	120	05.03/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense digital tuner that's both a fine performer and a great-value buy.	●					10	●			2
Cambridge Audio DAB500	150	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fine sound quality with good bass and crisp treble.	●					10	●		●	2
Creek T50	550	03.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine-sounding FM tuner, if a little pricey. Best with a sizeable external aerial.		●	●	●		64	●	●		Sl
Cymbol Electronics C-DAB1	1499	02.00	★★★★☆	Digital tuner that shines with classical concerts, thanks to its revealing sound.	●					8	●			Sl
Cyrus FM X	500	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	One for the FM radio purist. A stripped down spec, but capable of superb sound.		●				29	●			2
Denon TU-1800DAB	250	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi DAB/FM tuner in Awards 2005. Refined and full-bodied sound.	●	●	●			200	●	●	●	Sl



Denon TU-1800DAB

First analogue and now digital: Denon really has found the secret to making top-notch tuner separates. Sonic results are extremely impressive with a good level of detail thanks to its clear and relatively uncompressed delivery. Saving your favourite stations isn't a problem, either – there are 200 presets.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
RADIOS
BEST HI-FI DAB/FM TUNER
DENON TU-1800 DAB

Densen B-800	850	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Best analogue tuner in Awards 2004. This no-frills Danish tuner sounds superlative.		●				99				2
Dual ddab-01 (portable)	35	01.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Asda-special that isn't so special at all - cheap but we'd look elsewhere.	●	●				8				Wd
Dualit DAB Kitchen Radio (port)	200	06.06/FT	★★★★☆	Unique design - this fine radio has a full-bodied, balanced sound.	●	●				5				3
Freeplay Devo (portable)	100	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Wind-up as well as mains re-charging - neat idea, great for camping or caravaning.	●	●				5				Sl
Genus Geo 1 (portable)	70	01.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Looks great and is a joy to use, but sound quality is merely average.	●					0	●			Sl
Genus Vero 1 (portable)	85	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Lack of sonic ability means the Vero 1 must languish in mid-table mediocrity.	●	●				5	●			Sl
Goodmans GSR85DAB (port)	50	04.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Nice styling and good build that promises much, but the sound is nasty.	●	●				20	●			Sl
Intempo KT-01 (portable)	60	01.06/GT	★★★★★	Superb performance-per-pound - looks, functions and sounds just how we like it.	●	●				8	●			3
Intempo KTM-01 (portable)	125	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Unique kitsch design sold exclusively via John Lewis, part of the price goes to charity.	●	●				4				Pink
Intempo KTM-02	125	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Breat from the norm - it looks like no other and sounds pretty funky, too	●	●				4				Blu
Intempo PG-01 (portable)	70	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good for the money with stereo sound. Worth considering, but it is mains only.	●	●				4	●			Wd
Min of Sound DR011 (handheld)	80	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	Stylish handheld unit that plays music pretty persuasively and is involving with speech.	●					10	●			Sl
Morphy Richards DAB EPG	170	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Electronic-programme-guide is a neat idea, but the sound is flawed.	●	●				14		●		Sl
NAD C422	190	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Works well enough and sounds good for the money. A no-nonsense option.		●	●			30		●	●	2
Naim NAT05	825	10.01	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. The NAT05 proves radio still has the power to amaze.		●				99	●			Bk
Nevada ND-01 (pocket)	80	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best handheld radio in Awards 2005. Excellent value for money.	●	●				12				Sl
Perstel DR301 (portable)	150	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	DAB and FM radio plus an SD card for recording DAB and MP3.	●	●				3	●			Sl
Philips DA1000 (handheld)	150	07.04/GT	★★★★★	A tidy and compact personal DAB tuner with a very good level of performance.	●	●				20				Sl
Pure Digital DRX-701ES	160	10.02/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2002. A quality home tuner for digital radio.	●					99	●		●	2
Pure Digital DRX-702ES	210	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2003. Delivers digital and analogue in style.	●	●	●			99	●		●	2
Pure Digital Elan (portable)	70	02.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Sound lacks weight and punch and it feels cheap - a major disappointment.	●	●				16	●			Al
Pure Digital Evoke-1XT (port)	100	01.06/GT	★★★★★	Best DAB portable in Awards 2005. Great value.	●					6	●			2
Pure Digital Evoke-2XT (port)	150	01.06/GT	★★★★★	DAB/FM portable Product of the Year Awards 2005.	●	●				12	●			2
Pure Digital Evoke-3 (port)	200	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Most well-equipped of the range - fundamentally a great choice as a portable radio.	●	●				6			●	Wd
Pure Digital Oasis	120	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Weatherproof with connection-covers so you can treat this rich-sounding radio rough.	●					4	●			Al
Pure Digital Pocket DAB1000	110	01.04/GT	★★★★★	This go-anywhere personal companion has the sound quality to live up to its style.	●					10	●			Sl
Pure Digital Pocket DAB2000	200	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Disappointing - feels cheap and sounds characterless.	●	●				20				Sl
Pure Digital Sonus-1 XT (port)	110	06.05/GT	★★★★★	The sound, the build quality, and the fact that it talks to you makes this a winner.	●					6	●			Wd
Pure Digital Tempus-1 (port)	90	01.04/GT	★★★★☆	An Evoke-1 with a touch sensitive snooze handle for improved bedside manner.	●					10	●			Wd
Pure Digital The Bug (port)	130	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Not class-leading sound but its ability to pause and rewind radio is tempting.	●					6	●			2
Roberts CRD39 (portable)	120	06.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Ticks plenty of boxes, but misses the most important one: sound quality.	●	●				10		●	●	Sl
Roberts Gemini 1 (portable)	200	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great performer in all areas, but the price tag is just too hefty to entirely justify.	●	●				12				Sl
Roberts Gemini 6 (portable)	180	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Solid-sounding and easy to use with a well-designed remote: will grace any household.	●	●				10	●	●	●	Wd
Roberts Gemini 8 (portable)	140	02.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Handy features but it's cheap to the touch, and costs too much.	●	●				5	●	●		Bwn
Roberts Gemini 9 (mains radio)	120	09.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Fair as a clock radio but it's left floundering by more conventional DAB kit.	●	●				10	●	●		Sl
Roberts Gemini RD-11 (port)	140	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Well-equipped, sounds great and is good value. Records for 40 minutes too.	●	●				10		●		Wd/Lth
Roberts Gemini RD-27 (port)	120	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Good, perfectly enjoyable listen and the rewind radio is a great feature	●	●				5				Sl
Roberts R9965 (portable)	80	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Delivers a deep, sturdy performance in keeping with its quirky bomb-proof design.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Roberts R9988 (handheld)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	No-nonsense portable analogue radio that offers supreme performance for the cash.		●	●	●		0				Gry
Roberts RD-14 (handheld)	100	03.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent but this Sports radio won't have you leaping around with excitement.	●	●				0	●	●		Sl

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Tuners & portable radios

Take your pick from digital, analogue or hybrid tuners

BUDGET Up to £2500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	BANDS DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	Presets	Auto tune	RDS	Remote	Finishes
Roberts RD22 DAB (portable)	200	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	We doubt there's a more feature-laden DAB/FM radio around - sounds good, too.	●	●				20	●	●	●	Sl
Roberts RD50CFM (portable)	150	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Sounds as good as looks and includes PausePlus - an instant classic, fit for a Queen.	●	●				1	●	●		5
Sony ICF-M410L (portable)	50	07.04/FT	★★★★★	A no-nonsense radio, ideal for the bedroom, featuring great sound and style.		●	●	●		20				Sl
Sony ICF-SW100e	180	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and unusual worldband tuner which packs a lot into a neat leather carrying case.		●	●	●	●	50	●			Bk
T+A T1210R	100	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid premium-priced performer that will appeal to FM-only radio fans.		●						●		2
TEAC T-1D	200	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Ideal companion for the C-1D CD player and the A-1D amplifier.		●	●			30	●	●		Sl
TEAC T-H300DAB	200	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Fine match for TEAC's Reference Series, though the sound quality isn't special.	●	●	●			30	●	●	●	Sl
Tivoli iPAL	139	02.05/GT	★★★★★	Plug your iPod into this new version of the Award-winning radio for great sound.		●	●			0				Wt
Tivoli iSongBook (inc iPod Dock)	300	07.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Novel fold-down iPod dock is a neat idea, but it needs a serious price cut.		●	●			5			●	Wt
Tivoli Model 3	200	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Analogue clock radio - it looks gorgeous and sounds good, but at £200 it's expensive.		●	●			0				Wd
Tivoli Model DAB	230	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Highly desirable - fantastic retro styling and excellent clarity with a full weighty tone.	●	●				5				Wn
Tivoli Model One	100	07.04/FT	★★★★★	It may only be mono, but this is a lovely little radio that looks and sounds great.		●	●			0				5
Tivoli PAL (portable radio)	130	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Excellent performance from this sexy portable radio.		●	●			0				8
Xfm Digital Radio (portable)	130	02.05/GT	★★★★☆	Great styling, sound and plenty of useful features - just a bit pricey.	●	●				10	●			Wt
Yamaha TX-396L	130	10.00	★★★☆☆	Inoffensive if somewhat bland sound - will fit into a wide range of systems with ease.		●	●	●		40	●			Bk
Yamaha TX-492RDS	150	04.98	★★★☆☆	Good facilities and performance at a sensible price but not truly outstanding.		●	●			40	●	●		Bk

Integrated amplifiers/receivers

One-box powerhouses to drive your speakers – with or without tuners

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Int amp	Receiver	Power out (w)	Line level in	MM phono	MC phono	Tape loops	Preamp out	Speakers	Tone controls	Headphone	Remote	Finishes
Acoustic Solutions SP101	80	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	If your budget is really tight this product would be a good first step.	●		35	5	●		1	●	1	●	●		Sl
Arcam DiVA A65 Plus	400	07.03/ST	★★★★☆	Still a fine buy, just doesn't dominate the budget market any more.	●		40	4	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	Sl
Audio Analogue Primo Settanta	475	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Tidy amp with exquisite vocal delivery and tuneful bass.	●		70	5			1		1			●	Sl
Cambridge Audio A1 Mk3 SE	120	07.99/ST	★★★★☆	Great build and well-balanced, but you can get better for little more.	●		30	4			1		1	●			Bk
Cambridge Audio A5	120	07.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Rich, powerful with weight and insight.	●		60	5			1	●	1	●			2
Cambridge Audio Azur 540A	200	08.05/GT	★★★★★	Ideal building-block on which to build a fantastic budget system.	●		50	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Cambridge Aud. Azur 640A V2.0	300	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Without doubt the best sub-£500 amp we've heard.	●		75	6			2	●	2	●	●	●	Sl
Denon DRA-455	200	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Good value and it sounds great. Even the phono stage is acceptable.		●	52	2	●		1		2	●	●	●	Bk
Denon PMA-255UK	140	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting amp for your money - care is needed with system matching.	●		30	4			1		1	●	●		Bk
Denon PMA-355UK	230	12.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Had a good run but has met its match with the sub £300 amps now.	●		50	3			2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Flying Mole CA-S3	500	05.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	Triumph of miniaturisation but has disagreeably inhibited sound.	●		20	1			0		1				Sl
Focal-JMlab iCUB	450	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Hybrid amplifier/sub - add speakers and an MP3 player for hi-fi playback.	●		75	1			0		1			●	Bk
Marantz PM4001	180	01.06/GT	★★★★★	Exciting and rhythmic when paired with the CD5001 CD player.	●		55	5	●		2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7001	350	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Stunning amplifier that sees Marantz return to form.	●		70	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7200	330	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. The Marantz is still a strong contender.	●		95	4	●		2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Marantz PM7200 KI	500	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-equipped and sounds refined - best for classical or vocal-based music.	●		95	4	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
Myryad Z140	500	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	The Z140 will appeal to vinyl-lovers, but it needs punchy partnering kit.	●		50	4	●		2		1		●	●	2
NAD C320BEE	220	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Still capable of mixing it with the big boys - a classy budget purchase.	●		50	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
NAD C352	350	06.04/FT	★★★★★	Stereo amplifier Product of the Year in Awards 2004.	●		80	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
Onkyo A-933	500	11.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Tested with the C-733 CD player - sonically they can be bettered.	●		80	4	●		1	●	1		●	●	Sl
Pioneer A-209R	150	04.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Solid-enough for the money, but rivals offer more for a similar price.	●		35	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Pioneer A-307R	180	12.99/ST	★★★☆☆	The Pioneer's full-on sound lacks subtlety and can be fatiguing.	●		45	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bk
Qinpu A-1.0X	300	03.06/GT	★★★★☆	Detailed and informative sound - best for classical and easy-going music.	●		100	4			1		1	●		●	Bk
Rega Brio	328	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not an amplifier for everyone, but in the right circumstances it'll shine.	●		38	3	●		1		1				2
Rotel RA-01	250	06.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Great build and exciting presentation.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●		2
Rotel RA-02	380	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Cracking amp, powerful and vibrant sound.	●		40	4	●		1	●	2	●	●	●	2
Rotel RA-03	500	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Stereo amplifier Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Superb all-rounder.	●		70	4	●		1	●	1	●	●	●	2

Rotel RA-03

A wonderfully self-effacing amp that excels at almost everything. Dynamics are far stronger than the ouput would suggest and timing, midrange clarity and resolution are very good indeed. This is a superb all-round performer that works well with a wide range of systems and music – top-class build, too.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO AMPLIFIERS
ROTEL RA-03

Saxon A300	400	03.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Muscular delivery that will suit some, but it lacks finesse.	●		50	4			1	●	1			●	Sl
Sony TA-FB940R	350	12.00/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000 - natural, attention-grabbing sound.	●		70	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	2
TEAC A-ID	280	06.03/FT	★★★★☆	Makes sense when viewed as a companion for the C-1D CD player.	●		50	5	●		2		1	●	●	●	Sl
Yamaha AX-396	220	07.00/FT	★★★☆☆	Has all the right credentials, but it's rather anonymous and unexciting.	●		60	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bl
Yamaha AX-596	300	12.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Bold performance but trades treble detail for a smooth delivery.	●		100	3	●		2		2	●	●	●	Bl

BUDGET £501 and over

Arcam DiVA A80	630	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Incisive and musical presentation, beautiful build and slick looks.	●		65	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	Sl
Arcam DiVA A90	850	10.04/ST	★★★☆☆	Flexible and warm but ultimately, this amplifier sounds anonymous.	●		90	5			2	●	1	●	●	●	2
Arcam FMJ A32	1200	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	The FMJ A32 is a flexible product with good sound and masses of features.	●		100	5			2	●	2	●	●	●	2
Audio Analog. Maestro Settanta	1750	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Worth considering: the sound is entertaining and the build is superb.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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GLOSSARY
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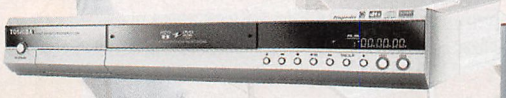

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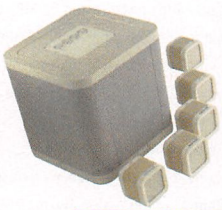

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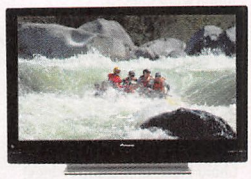

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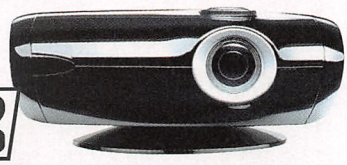

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Audio Analog. Puccini Settanta	950	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Top of the class when it comes to looks. Muscular, powerful sound, too.	●		70	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl
Audio Note Meishu	3787	06.96	★★★★☆	Delivers the goods at low levels and excels with acoustic music.	●		8	4			1		1				
Audio Note Oto SE	1600	07.02/ST	★★★★☆	Partner sensibly and this Audio Note amplifier will please like little else.	●		10	4			1						Bk
Audio Note Soro SE	2600	12.02/FT	★★★★☆	Blows valve stereotypes of excess warmth and soggy bass into the weeds.	●		20	4			1		1				Bk
Audionet SAM V2	2400	07.02/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - it isn't flawless, but its strengths are considerable.	●		110	5			1	●	1				2
AVI Laboratory Series	1499	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004. Digs deep.	●		200	6			1	●	1			●	Bk
Bryston B100 SST	2850	Awd05/GT	★★★★★	Stonking amplifier that performs well irrespective of musical genre.	●		100	7			1	●	1	●	●		Bk
Bryston B60	2000	02.00/FT	★★★★☆	No-nonsense, it simply gets on with the task of reproducing music.	●		60	4			1		1		●		
Cambridge Audio Azur 840A	750	04.06/FT	★★★★☆	Great spec and clever technology makes for a detailed, dynamic listen.	●		120	7			1	●	2	●	●	●	2
Chord Elect. CPM 2600 (+ legs)	3535	04.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fine amp - few rivals can match its power, speed and resolution.	●		120	6			2	●	1			●	Sl
Creek 5350SE	850	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Pair with the CD50 Mk2 for rhythmic sound and impressive detail.	●		90	5			1	●	2		●	●	Sl
Creek A50iR	595	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Very good amp for the money - combines simplicity and performance.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Sl
Cymbol Electronics CA1	999	01.98/ST	★★★★☆	A competitive design from the Brits which sounds fresh, fast and exciting.	●		40	5			1	●	1				Sl
Cyrus 6vs	650	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Super entry-level amp - if you're a Cyrus fan, you'll love it.	●		40	6			1	●	1			●	2
Cyrus 8vs	850	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £800-£1400 in Awards 2004. Swoonly good.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Cyrus 8vs/PSX-R	1250	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Strapping on a PSX-R to the 8vs takes the sound quality to new heights.	●		70	6			1	●	2		●	●	2
Denon PMA-SA1	5500	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Pair with DCD-SA1 CD player and the right speakers for gorgeous sound.	●		50	8	●		2		1				Sl
EAR/Yoshino V20	3430	11.98/GT	★★★★★	Stunning valve amp with top quality sonics. Choose speakers with care.	●		25	5			0		1				Sl
Eastern Electric M520	1540	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Not the obvious choice but one many people will love once they hear it.	●		24	3			1	●	1			●	Sl
Eclipse TD A502	875	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Looks like nothing else - one of the best options in this price range.	●		30	1			0		1				Sl
Electrocompaniet EC1-3	1400	10.04/ST	★★★★☆	Competitive - warm, even-handed sound and remarkable soundstage.	●		75	5			1	●	1			●	Bk
Exposure 2010s	599	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	For good, honest musical fun this makes a lot of sense. A fine amp.	●		75	6			1	●	1			●	Sl
Exposure 3010	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	A good performer with a rich and creamy sound.	●		100	6			1	●	1			●	Sl
Exposure Classic 35	1595	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	As musically rewarding as any sub-£2000 amplifier out there.	●		80	6			1	●	1			●	Sl
GRAAF GM50 (valve)	3950	08.04/FT	★★★★★	Fantastic - good enough to put other similarly priced amps to shame.	●		50	4			2		1			●	Bk
Inca Design Talon	700	10.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Not without merit or charm but it's a fundamentally unengaging listen.	●		80	4			0		1			●	Sl
Krell KAV-400xi	2498	03.04/FT	★★★★★	Accomplished all-rounder with power, refinement and good build.	●		200	4			1	●	1			●	2
Marantz PM-15S1	1100	UGSY.06	★★★★☆	Lovely design and good specs - sound is refined and rich.	●		90	6	●	●	2	●	1	●	●	●	Sl
Moon I-3	1595	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Strong performer with a distinctive sound that's easy-going.	●		100	6			0	●	2			●	Bk
Moon i-7	4750	07.06/FT	★★★★★	One of the best we've heard: little else can match its spread of talents.	●		150	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Myryad MXI2080	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005. A remarkable amp.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	2
Myryad MXI2150	1700	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Look past its appearance because it sounds absolutely lovely.	●		150	6			2		1			●	2
Naim Nait 5i	699	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Relentlessly musical with real verve - compatible with other brands.	●		50	4			1		1			●	Bk
Onkyo A-1VL	1100	10.04/ST	★★☆☆☆	Digital amplifier - a tiring and tiresome listen.	●		100	5	●		1	●	1			●	Sl
Orelle SA100evo	1200	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Incredibly insightful amplifier - deserves an audition.	●		80	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Pathos Classic One	1325	02.04/FT	★★★★☆	Valve/transistor hybrid that looks stunning - worth seeking out.	●		70	4			1		1			●	Bk
Pathos Inpol 2	5500	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Awsome - simply sensational sound and extraordinary build-quality.	●		50	5			1	●	2	●		●	Sl
Pathos Logos (Valve)	2750	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Looks magnificent and sounds even better - brilliant engineering.	●		110	5			1		1			●	Gry
PrimaLuna Prologue One	849	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Superb value and a great entry into the world of valve amps.	●		35	4			0		1				Bk
Primare I21	750	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	With the Primare CD21 the sound is natural with a wide soundstage.	●		75	4			1	●	1			●	2
Primare I30	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005.	●		100	6				●	1			●	2
Pro-ject Pre Box/Power Box	800	04.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Pre/power amp combo - not bad, but integrated rivals perform better.	●		65	4			1	●	1				Bk
Rega Mira 3	598	05.03/ST	★★★☆☆	We love the looks but it sounds bland alongside the class leaders.	●		61	4	●		1	●	1				2
Roksan Caspian M series-1	1000	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Solid performer that's still capable of mixing it with the class-leaders.	●		70	5			1	●	1			●	Sl
Roksan Kandy Mk L.III	650	07.05/FT	★★★★★	This new version reminds us what hi-fi really means - bargain piece of kit.	●		120	5	●		1	●	1		●	●	6
Sugden A21a	1049	04.03/GT	★★★★★	We love this hot-running machine, when well matched it'll sing.	●		25	4	●	●	1	●	1				Sl
Sugden Masterclass	3150	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Stonking performer, excellent combined with the Masterclass CD player.	●		33	3	●		1	●	2				Sl
T+A V10 (valve)	4600	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Very fine performer that's capable of a pleasing slice of sonic heaven.	●		80	5			1		1			●	Sl
Tube Technology Synergy PPS	9000	01.99	★★★★★	Gorgeous valve amp - all the convenience and power a user demands.	●		150	5			1	●	1				Sl
Tube Tech. Unisis Signature	2700	02.95	★★★★☆	Attractive valve amp; looks and great sound make it very good value.	●		35	4	●		1	●	1				Sl
Unison Research S2K (Valve)	1475	04.02/FT	★★★★☆	Offers fine build and subtle sound wrapped in a distinctive package.	●		15	4			1		1			●	Wd
Unison Research S8	3350	07.00/FT	★★★★☆	Fabulous with vocals - puts refinement ahead of sonic fireworks.	●		24	4			1		2			●	Wd
Unison Research Sinfonia	2950	04.06/FT	★★★★☆	Fine amp that's capable of a sparkling performance in the right system.	●		27	4			1		2			●	Wd
Unison Research Unico line	900	10.04/ST	★★★★★	Refined, but not prissy - an amplifier of rare ability.	●		80	4			2	●	2			●	Gry
Unison Research Unico P	750	01.06/FT	★★★★☆	Very likeable - fine build, good looks and brilliantly articulate midrange.	●		50	5	●	●	1		1			●	Al
Unison Research Unico SE	1325	09.05/ST	★★★★☆	Amazing when it comes to vocals - it's just a shame about the price.	●		140	4	●	●	1		2			●	Sl

Preamps

The control section of the amp – team with a power amp or active loudspeakers

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Line Level	INPUTS: MM phono	INPUTS: MC phono	OUTPUTS: Tape loops	OUTPUTS: No of outputs	OUTPUTS: Balanced out	OUTPUTS: Tone Controls	OUTPUTS: Headphone	OUTPUTS: Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Bellini Remote	625	11.02	★★★★☆	An elegant and refined three-box combo - 2xDonizetti monoblocs with the Bellini.	●	●		1	2				●	Gry
Audio Note M-1 R	900	10.00/FT	★★★★★	If you want a musically talented preamp there are very few superior.	●			1					●	Sl
Cyrus PreXvs	1000	01.05/FT	★★★★★	Detailed, agile and dynamic performer that is easy to upgrade.	●			1	2			●	●	2

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Preamps

The control section of the amp – team with a power amp or active loudspeakers

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	INPUTS: Line Level	INPUTS: MM phono	INPUTS: MC phono	OUTPUTS: Tape loops	OUTPUTS: No of outputs	OUTPUTS: Balanced out	OUTPUTS: Tone Controls	OUTPUTS: Headphone	OUTPUTS: Remote	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £1000														
Moth 30 Series Passive	175	09.92	★★★☆☆	Passive, line-level-only preamp. Voices sound natural, but results dependent on cable.	●			1						Bk
Myryad MXP2000	1000	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Tested with the MXA2150 power amp - the only shortcomings were with this preamp.	●			1	2				●	2
Naim NAC 112x	705	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAP 150x power amp - a hugely enjoyable listen.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Parasound Halo P3	600	11.02	★★★☆☆	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●	●		1	2	●	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99	750	03.05/GT	★★★★★	The 99/909 combo is a class performer that'll perform superbly in a wide range of systems.	●	●		1	1		●		●	Sl
Rotel RC1070	395	08.01/ST	★★★☆☆	The pair RB1070/RB1080 is best suited those who want rate power over subtlety.	●	●		2	2		●	●	●	2
Sugden Headmaster	749	06.01	★★★★★	Headphone amp/preamp - a great niche product that sounds brilliant. Was £599.	●			1	3			●		Gry
BUDGET £1001 and over														
Arcam FMJ C31	1200	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Bags of detail and great dynamic eloquence - with more coherence it could lead the pack.	●			2	1			●	●	2
Audia Flight	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but teamed with the Flight 50 power amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●			0	2	●			●	2
Audio Note M2-phono	2000	05.01/FT	★★★★☆	The M2 and the P4 power amp combinations is capable of breathtaking sonic feats.	●	●		1	4					Bk
Audio Research LS16MKII	3199	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fine combined with the 150.2 power amp - promises years of sonic pleasure.	●			1						Sl
Audio Research SP16	2499	08.02/FT	★★★★☆	Great sound from the entry-level combo of SP16 and VS55 power amp(now discontinued).	●	●		1					●	Sl
Audionet Pre 1 G2	2100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with Amp 1 power amp its sonic performance justifies the price.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Audiopax Model 5	3799	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great sounding preamp - just slightly let down by poor attention to build.	●			1	2				●	3
Cairn Nitro	1500	01.06/FT	★★★★★	Exhibits enormous clarity and sparkle - tested with the K1A Monoblocs, which let it down.	●									Gry
Chord Elect. CPA 4000 Enhan	7615	05.01	★★★★★	Use with the SPM 1200E amp - they belong right at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●			2	3	●		●	●	Sl
Cyrus DACXP	2200	09.05/FT	★★★★★	DAC with a preamp built in, paired with the X Power - works fabulously.	●			1	4	●			●	2
Densen B-200	1100	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Very good - paired with the B-310 power amp it's right up there with the best at this price.	●			2	4					2
DNM Series 3C Six	4100	03.99/FT	★★★★☆	Used with the DNM PA3s they merit a serious audition. Unimpressive cosmetics.	●			1	1	●				Bk
EAR/Yoshino 864	1850	Awd01/FT	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp, when used with 861 power, is something special.	●	●		0	5	●				Sl
GRAAF GM 13.5B II	3995	01.00	★★★★★	Partner with GM20 power amp for a truly magical valve combination. Brings music to life.	●			1	6	●				Bk
Krell KAV-280P	3000	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	Combine with the superb KAV-2250 for a talented performance.	●			1	2	●			●	Sl
Linn Exotik	1750	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Combine with the 2250 power amp for great looks and feel - sonic abilities fall short.	●			1	8				●	2
Moon P-3	2850	Awd01/FT	★★★★☆	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●			1	2	●			●	2
Naim NAC 202	1455	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this preamp with the NAP200 power amp is very tempting indeed.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Naim NAC 282	2945	09.04/GT	★★★★☆	Delivers a music buzz that few rivals can match - paired with the NAP 200 and Hi-Cap.	●			3	1				●	Bk
Primare Pre30	1200	01.03	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With A30.2 has a powerful, warm, generous sound.	●			1	3	●			●	Bk
Roksan Caspian M-series	1250	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amplifier £1400-£3000 in Awards 2004 with two Caspian M-series monoblocs.	●	●		1	3					Sl
Usher P-307A	1300	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Paired with the R1.5 power amp this is impressive.	●	●		1	2					2

Power amps

Supplies the music muscle to the loudspeakers – just add a pre-amp

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £800											
Audio Analogue Donizetti Mono	525	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Elegant and refined three-box combo - 2 x this monobloc plus the Bellini preamp.		●	100		●		Gry
Moth 30 Series Power	275	09.92	★★★☆☆	Skinny monobloc, capable of an open, informative sound throughout the frequency range.		●	30		●		Bk
Naim NAP 150x	795	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Strong combination with the NAC 112x preamp - hugely enjoyable.	●		50				Bk
Parasound Halo A23	600	11.02/GT	★★★☆☆	It's certainly talented, but the Halo P3/A23 power combo lacks some excitement.	●		125	●	●	●	Sl
Quad 99 Stereo	550	11.02/GT	★★★★★	Detail, speed, muscularity, authority and dynamics - 99 pre/power combo has the lot.	●		85		●		Sl
Roksan Caspian M series	750	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Brainstorming power amp - brings moribund recordings to life.	●		70	●	●		2
BUDGET £801 and over											
Arcam FMJ P1	1100	09.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Two P1s fail to deliver excitement when combined with the C30 preamp (now discontinued).		●	180		●		2
Arcam FMJ P7	2600	05.03/GT	★★★★★	The P7 sounds huge and paired with the AV8 processor the combo is simply stunning.	●		7x150		●		2
Arcam P1000	1600	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent but uninspiring with the Arcam AVP700 processor.			7x135			●	2
Audia Flight 50	4500	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but teamed with the Flight pre-amp it will satisfy for years to come.	●		50		●	●	2
Audio Research 150.2	2299	10.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fine combination with the LS16MkII power amplifier. Promises years of pleasure.	●		150				
Audionet Amp 1	3150	04.04/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap but combined with the Pre 1G2 preamp the sonic performance justifies the price.	●		200			●	2
Audiopax Model 78	4800	03.06/FT	★★★★★	If pure sound quality is your thing then the Model 78 is one of the best we've heard.	●		15	●	●		2
Cairn K1A Monoblocs	1500	01.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Two of these amps just don't have the drive or attack to satisfy.		●	50				Sl
Chord Electronics SPM 1200E	5765	05.01/FT	★★★★★	The CPA 4000 preamp and this 1200E belong at the forefront of high-end amplification.	●		350		●	●	Sl
Chord Electronics SPM 600	2330	07.99/FT	★★★★★	Used with CPA 2200 preamp (now discontinued) it's hard to beat - excel in detail retrieval.	●		130		●	●	Sl
Cyrus Mono X	1200	08.03/FT	★★★★★	The original PreX with MonoX is capable of breathtaking speed and detail resolution.		●	150		●	●	2
Cyrus X Power	1000	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the DACXP with preamp built in, the X Power works fabulously.	●		70	●	●	●	2
Densen B-310	1200	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Very good - paired with the B-200 preamp it's right up there with the best at this price.	●		80		●		2
Densen B-330	3000	02.06/FT	★★★★★	One of the most entertaining power amps we've come across in years.	●		120				2
DNM PA3	1900	05.01/FT	★★★★★	Superlative resolution, dynamics and timing. Tested with the Reson 3C Primus preamp.	●		40			●	Bk
DNM PA3S	2900	03.99/FT	★★★★☆	Used with the DNM 3C six, merits a serious audition, but cosmetics don't impress.	●		23			●	Bk
EAR/Yoshino 861	3980	Awd01/FT	★★★★★	Gutsy but involving valve-amp; used with 864 preamp, it's something rather special.	●		32	●	●	●	Sl
GRAAF GM 20	3500	01.00/FT	★★★★★	Partner with 13. 5BII preamp for a truly magical valve combination. Brings music to life.	●		25	●	●	●	Bk
Krell FPB-400CX	11997	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Paired with the CD/preamp this FPB 400cx has sky-high ability to match its stellar price.	●		400			●	Bk
Krell KAV-2250	3950	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Thrills - nothing else, at this price level, combines strength and subtlety so effectively.	●		250	●		●	Sl
Linn Chakra C5100	2000	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pair with the Unidisk SC for quality multichannel that's easy to operate.	●		5x56		●	●	Bk

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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WHAT SHOULD I DO TO GET THE BEST DEAL ON THIS CAR?

Worried about paying too much for your new car? Don't. With Deal Check from **What Car?** you can find the best price for your new vehicle, and find out how much you should be getting for your old one. So, before you buy a car, buy **What Car?**, try **whatcar.com/dealcheck** or call us on **0800 0839 639** first.

BEFORE YOU BUY A CAR, BUY

Power amps continued...

Supplies the music muscle to the loudspeakers – just add a pre-amp

BUDGET Up to £800

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Stereo	Mono	Power (w)	Bridgeable	Phono in	XLR in	Finishes
Moon W-3	3450	Awd01/FT	★★★★☆	Beautifully built, the P-3/W-3 combination puts long-term listenability before attack.	●		120	●	●	●	2
Myryad MXA2150	1500	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	This power amp is a real gem, the MXP2000 pre we combined it with lost it the star.	●		150				2
Myryad MXA7150/MXD6000	5900	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Sombre looking but the 7150 amp with the MXD6000 processor is a top-class performer.			7x150				SL
Naim NAP 200	1445	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Naim's pairing of this power amp with the NAC202 preamp is very tempting indeed.	●		70				Bk
Parasound Halo A52	1500	11.03/FT	★★★★☆	It's not cheap, but this is an excellent piece of kit with fine sound and huge appeal.	●		5x125	●	●	●	Sl
Primare A30.2	1200	01.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. With the Pre30 it has a powerful, generous sound.	●		120	●	●	●	Bk
Primare A30.5 MkII	1700	05.03/ST	★★★★☆	Good all-rounder with the SP31.7 processor but it lacks the last word in sheer brute force.	●		5x120		●		Bk
Quad 909	900	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Used with the 99 preamp this is a class performer. Will suit a wide range of systems.	●		140		●		Sl
Roksan Caspian M-series Mono	1100	09.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo amp over £3000 Awards 2004. Two of these with the Caspian M-series preamp.		●	100				Sl
Rotel RB-1090	1745	07.00/GT	★★★★☆	Goes as loud as anyone could want, but it's not the most subtle (tested at £1650).	●		380		●	●	2
Rotel RB1080 (THX)	845	08.01/ST	★★★☆☆	The solid pair of RB1070/RB1080 is best suited to those who place power over subtlety.	●		200		●	●	2
Rotel RMB-1077(multichannel)	1600	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Cleverly designed, talented, seven-channel amp - will work well in a wide range of systems.			7x100		●		Sl
Rotel RMB1075 (THX)	845	05.03/ST	★★★★★	Stunning combined with the RSP1066 processor. Impressive in stereo and with movies.	●		120x5		●		2
Usher R1.5	1500	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Paired with the P-307A preamp the R1.5 is the star - lovely organic sound.	●		150	●	●	●	1
Yamaha MX-D1	3000	03.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Packed with clever technology, but musically it's a disappointment.	●		500		●	●	Bk

Phono & headphone amps

Make your amp turntable-friendly and get the best from your headphones

BUDGET Up to £1000

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Headphone	Phono amp	Moving magnet	Moving coil	Adj cart loading	Line level intputs	Remote	Finishes
Audio Analogue Aria	495	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely built and cleverly engineered, but the sound isn't good enough to worry the best.			●	●	●			Sl
Bellari VP 129	180	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable, flexible phono stage - audio circuitry is valve powered and it has a headphone output.		●	●					Red
Cambridge Audio Azur 540P	40	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Musical and involving - another exemplary Azur product.		●	●			0		2
Clearaudio Basic Symmetry	540	02.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Certainly a decent performer, but it lacks the sonic sparkle to shine at this price point.		●		●	●			Sl
Creek OBH-21	190	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent composure and finesse for the money, though you may prefer an amp with more bass.	●					1		Sl
Creek OBH-21SE	250	05.03/FT	★★★★★	An amp that sounds absolutely gorgeous with an appropriate source and set of headphones.	●					1		Sl
EarMax Pro Headphone Amp	425	06.99	★★★★★	They don't come much cuter than this valve-powered headphone amp - lust at first listen.	●					1		Bk
Ergo Amp 1	169	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With deep bass and good pace it creates a truly thrilling listen, but there's no room for let up.	●							Bk
Graham Slee Era Gld MkV/PSU1	460	02.04/GT	★★★★★	Limited features, but it sounds wonderful. Skills usually only found only at twice the price.		●	●			0		Sl
Graham Slee Era Gld V/Elev EXP	970	Awd04/FT	★★★★★	This two-box combination is one of the best phono stages we've ever heard.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Graham Slee Gram Amp 1	85	04.01/GT	★★★★★	Superbly fluid and open presentation - we can't imagine anyone not liking this little star.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Gram Amp 2	125	06.02/FT	★★★★★	Great-value phono stage that will make a considerable upgrade from most in-built models.		●	●			0		Bk
Graham Slee Solo/PSU1	460	10.04/FT	★★★★★	Superb all-rounder that gets to the music's heart - deserves good headphones.	●					2		Sl
Linn Linto	995	09.97	★★★★☆	Vinyl fans will love this phono stage - it'll breathe new life into your old records.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Musical Fidelity X-CAN v3	250	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	With good headphones, offers sweet treble that works wonderfully well with classical pieces.	●					1		Sl
NAD PP2	50	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Solid, likeable performer that really makes sense in the budget systems of vinyl lovers.		●	●	●		0		Gr
Naim Headline (exc pow sup)	295	07.98/FT	★★★★☆	An expensive but worthwhile headphone amplifier. The perfect partner for Naim amps.	●							Bk
Pro-ject Head Box MKII	75	01.06/FT	★★★★★	If you don't have a headphone out, plug the Head Box into a spare tape loop and you're away.	●					-		Bk
Pro-ject Head Box SE	150	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	Champion when it comes to connectivity but it's a little out-boxed on purely sonic terms.	●					2		Bk
Pro-ject Phono Box MkII	55	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	For systems that cost less than £1000 this perfectly formed phono stage offers excellent sound.		●	●	●		1		Sl
Pro-ject Phono Box SE	150	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Fine development of the original, ideally suited to use with a wide variety of turntables.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Pro-ject Tube Box	300	12.03/FT	★★★★★	A valve phono stage that sounds excellent with a wide range of music.		●	●	●	●	0		Bk
Roksan Caspian	650	Awd01/FT	★★★★☆	Fine phonostage that performs well on all counts, but has many cheaper rivals to fight off.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Roksan Caspian M-Phono SE	1000	02.04/GT	★★★★★	A massively talented performer that'll deliver a refined and detailed sound in the right system.		●	●	●	●	0		Sl
Sonneteer Sedley	499	06.99	★★★★★	Sparkling treble, open midband and taut bass make this phono stage a real sonic star.		●	●	●	●	0		2
Trichord Dino	299	06.01/FT	★★★★★	Best phono stage in Awards 2005. A slice of high-end performance at a very competitive price.		●	●	●		0		Bk

Trichord Dino

This has been our favourite phono stage for the last two years. Trichord saw a gap in the phono market and launched the superb Dino to fill it and nothing has come along to beat it. Overall the Dino manages to unearth all kinds of detail and then perform the tricky task of assembling it all into a coherent and enjoyable whole.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST PHONO STAGE
TRICHORD DINO

Speakers

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Acoustic Energy Aegis Compact	110	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Compact in name and style - the lack of dynamics makes them a little lifeless.	●		88	8	100		26x16x14	2
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo 3	350	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Remain among our favourite floorstanders at the price - still worth an audition.		●	90	8	150	●	88x22x19	3
Acoustic Energy Aegis Evo One	180	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2002 in their prime, but newer rivals have caught up.	●		89	8	100	●	36x19x24	3
Acoustic Energy Aelite Two	450	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	These large standmounts promise an enjoyable long-term experience.	●		90	6	175	●	45x23x30	3
Acoustic Energy Linear 3	500	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Sound entertaining, but we'd prefer more quality and less quantity of sound.		●	90.5	8	150	●	91x24x27	Sl/Bk
Arcam Alto	400	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Startling dynamic ability and warm sound. Designed to match Solo system.	●		85	8	100	●	26x14x24	2
ATC SCM7	499	04.03/ST	★★★★★	Reach remarkable levels of performance - they're class in a half-pint glass.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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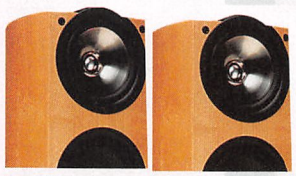
Speakers

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Audiovector K1	320	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	A must-hear if size is important - they sound much bigger than they are.	●		87	4	100		26x14x22	6
Audiovector K1 Super	420	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun, versatile and surprisingly dynamic. Ideal for small rooms.	●		87	4	120	●	26x14x22	6
AVI Neutron IV	500	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Terrific if you want compact speakers, but don't want to sacrifice performance.	●		87	8	150		27x14x21	3
B&W CM1	500	04.06/FT	★★★★☆	Fine performers, with powerful bass for such a small speaker.	●		84	8	100	●	28x17x28	3
B&W DM303	180	09.02/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Now fail to match the latest competition.	●		88	8	100		33.20.24	2
B&W DM600 S3	200	08.03/ST	★★★★☆	Fantastic-looking but relaxed bass means they work best in a 5.1 system.	●		88	8	100		29x18x22	3
B&W DM601 S3	250	03.02/ST	★★★★★	Stunning speakers - evolutionary improvements on their predecessors.	●		88	8	100	●	37.20.23	3
B&W DM602 S3	300	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	In the right environment they can still excite like little else at the money.	●		90	8	120	●	49x24x29	3
B&W DM602.5 S3	400	05.02/ST	★★★★☆	Extremely well-built entry-level speakers but they can lack bass power.		●	88	8	100	●	85x20x29	3
Castle Richmond 3i	320	12.04/FT	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable speakers that are worth a serious listen.	●		88.5	8	75		33x17x23	8
Cyrus CLS50	450	09.01	★★★★☆	Fabulous in most areas, but are let down by below-par bass performance.	●		86	8	100	●	25.18.27	3
DALI Concept 1	180	02.06/ST	★★★☆☆	Lively, but lack the cutting-edge performance needed to be top of the class.	●		87	8	100		31x17x19	3
DALI Concept 2	249	02.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Excel in inoffensiveness but fall short when it comes to excitement levels.	●		87	8	120		39x20x26	2
DALI Concept 6	399	07.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Have many strengths, but not talented enough to worry the class leaders.		●	91	8	150		93x20x26	2
Dynaudio Audience 42	400	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Provide a very enjoyable listen at the price, so meriting a serious audition.	●		86	4	150		28x17x25	4
Elac CL82 Titan	410	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Communicative, upfront listen and look great on a stand - partner with care.	●		89	4	120	●	33x20x27	3
Eltax Liberty 3+	149	01.01/ST	★★★★☆	Not the most even-handed, but they are still great-sounding speakers.	●		87	6	80	●	38x21x34	2
Eltax Liberty 5+	199	03.99	★★★★★	Expressive and exciting, these are excellent speakers for the money.		●	87	6	100	●	84x20x34	2
Eltax Monitor III	129	06.00/GT	★★★★★	Compact, cohesive-sounding and strong on rhythm - a great-value buy.	●		89	6	90	●	30x19x23	2
Energy Connoisseur C3	400	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Well made stylish speakers with good timing and rhythm but brash treble.	●		92	8	125		39x20x29	2
Epos ELS3	200	02.06/ST	★★★★☆	Enjoyable but their size means they are restricted at the lower end of the scale.	●		87	4	100		27x18x20	3
Epos ELS303	400	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Not a disaster but Epos's standmounters are better sorted and better value.		●	87	4	200	●	85x18x20	3
Epos M12.2	450	07.05/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £450-£750 in Awards 2005.	●		87	8	120	●	38x20x25	3
Epos M5	349	02.05/ST	★★★★★	Trustworthy speakers with a list of talents as long as your arm.	●		87	4	100	●	33x17x21	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 706s	309	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Offer an impressively sophisticated sound for a very reasonable price.	●		90	8	80	●	37x22x25	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 707s	399	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Imposing in many ways - audition if your tastes run to the forceful.	●		92	8	110	●	49x24x30	3
Focal-JMlab Chorus 714s	479	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Deeply impressive on every level. The 714s are clear winners in their class.		●	91	8	90		90x20x27	3
Gale Gold Monitor	90	02.02/GT	★★★★☆	Decent buy if you're on a budget - match them with smooth-sounding kit.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x18	1
Gale Silver Monitor	80	07.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good and are at their best with rock, but watch out for peaky treble.	●		88	6	90	●	27x18x17	2
Jamo E805	199	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Small in stature and sound, but the price tag is comparatively large.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
KEF Cresta 10	130	09.03/ST	★★★☆☆	They're cheap, but KEF can do much better than these disappointments.	●		90	8	100	●	31x19x24	3
KEF Cresta 30	200	12.03/FT	★★★☆☆	A better bet than the Cresta 10s, but the series is a disappointment.		●	90	8	100	●	83x19x24	3
KEF iQ1	229	02.06/ST	★★★★☆	Solid, dependable all-rounder, but they can't quite match the top performers.	●		88	8	100	●	30x18x26	5
KEF iQ3	280	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive-quality and they do a good all-round job for the money.	●		89	8	120	●	37x22x33	4
KEF iQ5	400	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Stereo speaker Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Stunning floorstanders.		●	88	8	130	●	82x18x26	4



KEF iQ5

The best pair of KEFs we've heard in years – they produce stunning scale and authority for something this size. Put them at the end of a quality stereo set-up and they sing like little else at this price and will do equally well if fronted by a budget home-cinema system. They're not fussy about positioning, either.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
STEREO SPEAKERS
KEF iQ5

Klegg KG-103	299	05.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive to look at but the sound quality is unimpressive at this price level.	●		87	8	60		30x19x25	4
Linn Classik Unik	250	01.03/GT	★★★★★	With the Classik Music System they're easy to listen to and have fine insight.	●		88	8	n/a		36x32x34	2
Mission m31i	140	12.04/GT	★★★★★	We fully endorse the 'i' for 'improved', these are great little speakers.	●		88	8	75	●	26x17x28	3
Mission M32i	180	02.06/ST	★★★★☆	Loud and entertaining with an impressive sense of scale and authority.	●		90	8	100	●	32x20x33	3
Mission M33i	230	07.05/FT	★★★★★	If you want floorstanders we would happily recommend these mighty Missions.		●	90	8	100	●	85x20x33	3
Mission m34i	330	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Grand, imposing sound - if you must have a floorstander listen to these.		●	93	8	150	●	95x20x33	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B2	200	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Still accomplished and well worth an audition.	●		90	6	100	●	35x19x25	3
Monitor Audio Bronze B4	350	02.03/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting and muscular listen, but not the most faithful reproduction on offer.		●	91	6	150	●	85x19x26	2
Monitor Audio Silver RS1	350	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Thoroughly likeable and enjoyable - they're laidback about room position too.	●		90	6	80	●	31xx19x24	5
Monitor Audio Silver S5	450	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Fine speakers, but don't do enough to challenge for class honours.		●	90	6	100	●	80x18x20	4
Mordaunt-Short Avant 904i	250	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	If you must have floorstanding speakers, these are a fine choice.		●	89	4-8	100	●	80x17x27	3
Mordaunt-Short Avant 906	350	05.04/ST	★★★★☆	Thrive in large open spaces but not the last word in sonic excellence.		●	90	6	150	●	85x17x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS912	200	09.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Disappointing design which is average with h-fi but better with movies.	●		89	6	150	●	36x21x30	2
Mordaunt-Short MS914	250	07.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking value for money - refreshingly uncomplicated, full of enthusiasm.		●	89	6	150	●	90x21x27	2
NAD 820	200	UGSY.06	★★★★☆	Two-way speakers that offer a fast and excitingly dynamic performance.	●		91	8	90		12x7x9	2
NHT Absolute Zero	350	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Unexpectedly weighty smooth sound for such small boxes.	●		86	6	100		25x14x19	2
NHT SB2	300	02.05/ST	★★★★☆	Among the most enthusiastic speakers around, only drawback is the treble.	●		92	8	150	●	30x19x22	Bk
Q Acoustics 1010	100	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Magical little boxes, ideal for budget separates and micro systems.	●		86	6	75		22x15x20	3
Quad 11L	379	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	No longer top of the class, but a classic nonetheless - offer a lot in sonic terms.	●		86	6	150	●	33x19x25	4
Quad 12L	500	07.05/GT	★★★★☆	Talented standmount speakers with superlative standard of finish.	●		88	6	125	●	36x21x25	4
Revel Concerta M12	400	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Well worth a try if low-end excitement is your thing.	●		87	8	150		32x23x30	3
Revolver R33	499	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Highly competent standmounters, not ideal if you value excitement above all.	●		89	8	100	●	39x21x28	Mp
Revolver RW16	399	05.06/FT	★★★★☆	Easy to like - updates have improved the performance without spoiling them.	●		90	6	100	●	34x18x23	2
Ruark Acoustics Epilogue II	345	08.02/ST	★★★★☆	Mightily appealing with classy build and fine midrange - warrant an audition.	●		87	8	100	●	27x19x23	Va

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
BUDGET Up to £500												
Tannoy Fusion 1	100	08.04/FT	★★★★☆	Classy and largely capable - if cash is tight then these are a solid buy.	●		87	8	70		30x17x22	2
Tannoy Sensys DC1	449	07.03/FT	★★★★☆	Highly competent speakers, but would benefit from a more passion.	●		88	8	110	●	41x21x29	3
Triangle Comete Es	495	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Exciting and involving but not what you'd call a relaxing listen.	●		91	8	80	●	17x14x13	3
Triangle Titus Es	370	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Capable speakers but in the face of stiff competition they fail to inspire.	●		90	8	60	●	37x30x18	3
Wharfedale Diamond 8.1	120	09.03/ST	★★★★☆	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neat solution for small listening rooms.	●		86	6	100	●	30x20x18	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.2	150	02.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but they are no longer a match in this highly competitive field.	●		86	6	100	●	36x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 8.3	200	12.01	★★★★★	Terrific performers for the money. Few can match their all-round abilities.		●	86	6	100	●	80x21x26	2
Wharfedale Diamond 9.0	100	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Great sound from tiny cabinets - look no further for value compact speakers.	●		86	6	75		23x15x17	5
Wharfedale Diamond 9.1	180	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers under £250 in Awards 2005.	●		86	6	100	●	30x19x28	4
Wharfedale Diamond 9.4	300	02.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Can't hold a candle to their little brother - they're a plodding, unexciting listen.		●	86	6	120	●	85x22x30	2
Wharfedale LoudPanel	150	11.99/GT	★★★★★	Exciting speakers that look like picture frames. Great if lack of visibility is vital.			87	8	70		24x46x21	2
BUDGET £501 to £1500												
Acoustic Energy Aelite Three	750	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Big, bold and balanced speakers for sensible money.		●	89	8	175	●	92x23x30	3
Arcaydis AK3	599	07.03/FT	★★★★★	Highly enjoyable; look plain and boxy but sound sweet and full-bodied.		●	89	8	100	●	79x20x24	Va
Arcaydis AK3.2	950	06.04/FT	★★★★☆	Spritely pair of floorstanders that should certainly be worth an audition.		●	89	8	100	●	90x20x24	3
ART Skibo	800	08.03/FT	★★★★☆	Fast and fun enough to make these speakers worth a serious listen.	●		90	8	n/a		44x19x25	2
ATC SCM12	1000	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Extremely honest, work best with muscular amps.	●		84	8	300	●	39.22.26	Ch
Audio Note AZ-Three	799	10.01	★★★★☆	Stunning when fed the right kind of music. Rockers may find they lack punch.		●	94	6	100	●	100x28x32	Va
Audiovector Mi1 Signature	1320	04.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sufficient talent to tangle with the class-leaders, but a bit pricey.	●		88	8	160	●	35x20x28	5
B&W 704	1400	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Offers detail and clarity that is unrivalled at this price, but could time better.		●	90	8	150	●	96x22x32	5
B&W 705	900	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Low end is a little short of authority but otherwise they're stunners.	●		89	8	120	●	42.22.32	5
Canton Vento 802	700	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	For sheer excitement, they're the best around for this money.	●		87	8	150		36x22x31	3
Canton Ergo 609 DC	1300	07.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Exciting powerful sound of immense scale, but haven't got all-round appeal.		●	88	8	170	●	105x23x31	4
Castle Column	550	UGSY.06	★★★★☆	Compact, beautifully made floorstanders that are impressive in many respects.		●	87	6	100	●	88x14x19	8
Castle Conway 3	999	10.02/ST	★★★☆☆	Promise much, don't have the sonic ability to challenge the best at this price.		●	88	8	175	●	91x22x27	9
Castle Howard S3	1499	08.01/FT	★★★★☆	Excellent craftsmanship and solid performance. Well worth an audition.		●	88	8	175	●	99x21x32	9
DALI Evidence 470	1100	04.00	★★★★☆	Slightly flat sound but deliver plenty of information and look stylish.		●	90	4	200	●	97x23x31	3
DALI Ikon 2	550	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Energetic performer that delivers great scale and insight for the money.	●		91.5	6	130	●	44x19x30	2
DALI Ikon 5	700	06.06/FT	★★★★☆	Engaging and likeable with good dynamics and crisp timing.		●	88	8	125	●	81x15x26	2
DALI Ikon 6	899	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £750-£1000 in Awards 2004.		●	91.5	6	150	●	100x19x33	2
DALI Royal Menuet II	575	10.00	★★★★☆	Refined and musical performers that work best in smaller rooms. Superb.	●		86	4	100	●	26x16x19	4
Diapason Emera	875	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Capable of impressive performance, but they lack dynamics and drive.	●		89	8	130		37x20x29	3
Diapason Karis	1295	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Great-sounding luxury speakers that take up a minimal amount of space.	●		87	6	150		29x19x26	2
Dynaudio Audience 52	650	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Classy and will grace any mid-price set up.	●		86	4	150		33.20.26	4
Dynaudio Audience 52SE	950	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Excellent speakers that really do sound like a special edition upgrade.	●		86	4	150		35x20x26	4
Eclipse TD 510	1200	03.06/FT	★★★★★	Unconventional - clever engineering results in a speaker of rare talent.	●		83	6	40		36x24x35	3
Elac FS207.2	1000	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent performers for the money, but not the greatest.		●	89	4	250	●	94x17x27	2
Energy Connoisseur C-7	800	04.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Do the job, but for this kind of money you can buy some amazing speakers.		●	93	8	200		97x17x39	2
Epos M15.2	699	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Accomplished all-rounders, offering solid performance at a reasonable price.		●	88	8	120	●	87x20x25	3
Epos M22	949	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Best floorstanders in this supertest - they'll give you a rousing sonic ride.		●	87	6	200	●	88x20x25	3
Everything But The Box Terra II	999	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Unique styling which won't suit everyone, but they are extremely capable.	●		86	8	100		38x18x28	14
Focal-JMlab Profile 908	1399	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Elegant speakers that have a great midrange and excellent detail resolution.	●		90	6	100	●	33.5x18x23	2
JBL Ti2K	1400	03.00/FT	★★★★★	Terrific design that looks great - astonishing sound for under £2000.	●		88	8	200	●	42x28x42	2
KEF iQ7	600	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Deliver a strong performance, with impressive authority and scale.		●	90	8	150	●	87x22x33	4
KEF iQ9	800	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid performers - if you want refined and muscular speakers give these a go.		●	91	8	200	●	95x22x33	4
KEF XQ Five	1500	05.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Aren't the sonic stars we expected - the Reference range does better.		●	90	8	150	●	101x23x30	5
KEF XQ One	750	06.03/ST	★★★★☆	Not the best, but if their style appeals we'd urge you to take a listen.	●		89	8	120	●	42x23x31	5
Linn Katan	650	09.01	★★★★☆	Involving and entertaining performers - work well with a wide range of music.	●		85	8	n/a	●	34x17x23	4
Linn Ninka	1100	10.01	★★★☆☆	Unusual shape and beautiful finish, but their performance is only average.		●	90	4	n/a	●	98x25x28	3
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 10	800	08.01/FT	★★★★★	Few speakers 36cm tall are capable of a sound with so much conviction.	●		88	8	100	●	36x20x27	4
Monitor Audio Gold Ref. 20	1499	03.01/FT	★★★★★	Immensely accomplished - fast and dynamic sound with bags of resolution.		●	89	6	150	●	93x20x30	4
Monitor Audio GS20	1500	06.06/FT	★★★★☆	Impressive - clean, clear, informative sound and even-handed presentation.		●	89	6	150	●	93x21x28	6
Monitor Audio Silver RS6	600	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Looks dressed to kill, delivers plenty of detail and punches like a heavyweight.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	5
Monitor Audio Silver S6	600	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive with good timing and attack, but the bass can be heavy-handed.		●	91	6	120	●	85x19x25	4
Monitor Audio Silver S8	800	03.03/FT	★★★★☆	Smart, well built and offer a wide dynamic range; bass can overwhelm.		●	91	6	175	●	90x19x27	4
Monopulse Model 32A	895	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Great for the money - fast, dynamic sound and tracks rhythms superbly.		●	89	8	150	●	96x22x25	10+
Neat Motive 3	650	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Fast, dynamic and punchy - one of the finest entertainers below £1000.	●		88	8	100	●	33x16x20	4
Opera Mini	650	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully built and good enough to challenge hard for class honours.	●		89	8	60		28.15.25	3
Pioneer S-H810V	700	03.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Peripherally these are worthy speakers but fundamentally they are also-rans.		●	89	6	130	●	119x25x30	Bch
PMC GB1	1145	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Clever design creates a big sound that is good fun to listen to.		●	87	8	150	●	87x16x23	3
ProAc Studio 110	749	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Excellent - with the right system, these are nothing less than spectacular.	●		88	8	150	●	38x20x24	4
ProAc Studio 140	1400	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1000-£1500 in Awards 2005. Remain class-leaders.		●	91	8	250	●	104x19x28	4
ProAc Tablette Reference 8	699	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Great speakers that can entertain like few others at this price.	●		86	8	100	●	27x15x23	4
Quad 22L	895	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Very capable speakers - their big, bold sound suits larger rooms.		●	89	6	200	●	87x21x28	4
Revolver R45	899	06.05/ST	★★★★☆	Big, smooth, relaxing sound but don't use them in small rooms.		●	90	8	200	●	93x25x32	3

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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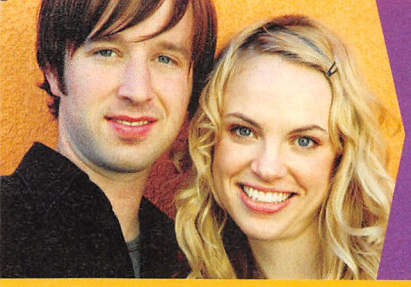

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Speakers continued...

From floorstanders to standmounters to all-in-one active monitors

BUDGET £501 to £1500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Standmounts	Floorstanders	Sensitivity (db/w/m)	Impedance (ohm)	Max power handling (w)	Biwirable	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Finishes
Ruark Acoustics Etude	650	04.03/ST	★★★★☆	Much to like - good timing, refined midrange and an exciting listen.	●		87	8	120	●	34x21x27	4
Ruark Acoustics Prelude II	900	10.02/ST	★★★★☆	Tempting propositions, the performance promises years of enjoyment.		●	88	8	120	●	88x21x22	Va
Ruark Acoustics Sabre III	899	06.05/ST	★★★★★	Thrilling delivery really makes you want to listen to music.	●		86	8	120		34x20x27	2
Ruark Acoustics Talisman III	1500	05.06/GT	★★★★★	Exciting and entertaining performers - a pacy sound that must be heard.		●	86	8	120	●	84x22x31	2
Spendor S3/5se	895	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Wonderfully natural-sounding, expecially useful for smaller rooms.	●		84	8	125	●	30x17x19	2
Spendor S3e	795	04.06/ST	★★★★☆	Excellent - if you want neutral, insightful speakers, there are few better.	●		86	8	125	●	34x17x26	4
Spendor S5e	1195	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1000-£2000 in Awards 2004.		●	87	8	200	●	79x17x26	4
Spendor S6e	1495	11.04/FT	★★★★☆	Thoroughly enjoyable, great choice for long listening sessions.		●	88	8	250	●	88x19x30	4
Spendor SR5 (wallmount)	1000	06.03/FT	★★★★★	Wallmounts - sacrifice nothing in sonic performance to traditional speakers.	●		88	8	125	●	31x31x18	4
Tannoy Eyris 1	600	04.03/ST	★★★☆☆	Eye-catching design, but their cold character will leave you unmoved.	●		88	8	75	●	36x17x26	2
Tannoy Eyris 2	1000	02.02/FT	★★★★☆	Fine buy, combining refined sound, solid build and excellent finish.		●	89	8	125	●	91x17x26	2
Tannoy Sensys DC2	649	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Serious floorstander option - take care with aggressive or bright-sounding kit.		●	89	8	175	●	97x21x29	3
Tannoy ST50 (Super Tweeter)	600	12.02/FT	★★★★★	Super-high-frequency speakers, designed to sit on your existing pair.			93	8	200		15x10	Bk
Totem Arro	1000	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	Sleek design and very accomplished and will work well in most systems		●	86	4	80		85x13x18	2
Vienna Acoustics Schonberg	1500	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Good looking, but sonically more suited to home cinema than hi-fi.		●	91	4	200		105x27x9	Al

BUDGET £1501 and over

Acoustic Energy AE1 MkIII	1990	07.04/FT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers over £2000 in Awards 2004. Incredible performance.	●		87	8	200		31x19x25	3
Acoustic Energy Ref AE3 MKII	4490	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fine floorstanders that impress with their insight and crisp presentation.		●	90	6	125		99x19x29	Bk
ART Expression (plus stands)	4000	10.02/FT	★★★★☆	Terrific speakers that can unravel a recording with ease. Deserve shortlisting.	●		88	8	100		42x20x30	Va
ART Skibo/Skibo bass module	1600	08.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Transforms the Skibo into a floorstander, but it's not worth the extra £800.		●	90	8	n/a	●	108x22x28	2
ART Stiletto 6	1950	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Capable of ice-hard bass with excellent definition and power.		●	89	4	80	●	96x22x20	2
ATC Active 20	3251	11.03/FT	★★★★★	Top class active speakers - a stunning blend of insight, dynamics and timing.	●		84	8	300	●	30.16.21	Ch
ATC SCM150ASL	11858	06.05/FT	★★★★★	If you judge on how they sound these are up there with the all-time greats.	●		-	-	A350		34.8x19.6x25.5	6
ATC SCM35	1999	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Scintillating - following a design blip the SCM35s are back with a vengeance.		●	85	8	300	●	88x23x30	2
B&O Beolab 8000	2298	01.03/GT	★★★★☆	Tall, slender and organ-piped shaped - fine with BeoSound 9000 system.		●		-	A80		132x15x15	4
B&O BeoLab3	1975	09.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Impressive visually and some excellent qualities, but they cost far too much.	●		-	-	A125/125		24x14x17	4
B&O BeoLab5	10000	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Work equally well as sculpture as they do speakers - gratify on every level.		●	-	-	A2500		97x49dia	Bk
B&W 703	2000	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Teetering on the brink of greatness but can't quite muster overall coherence.		●	90	8	200	●	101x23x36	5
B&W 805S	1600	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo speakers £1500-£2000 in Awards 2005.	●		88	8	120	●	42x24x35	3
B&W XT4	1700	05.06/GT	★★★★★	Stylish speakers that have bags of substance behind their good looks.		●	86	8	150		114x15x20	Al
DALI Helicon 300	1835	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Immensely likeable, combine insight, smooth midrange and get-up-and-go.	●		86	4	200	●	44x21x36	2
DALI Helicon 400	3000	11.05/FT	★★★★★	Extremely likeable speakers that combine refinement with bite.	●		88	4	300	●	102x22x46	2
DALI Helicon 800	4000	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Gets to the heart of recordings - will reward like little else at this price.		●	89.5	4	400	●	100x25x50	2
Dynaudio Audience 72SE	1750	01.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Quality speakers, but they lack the of refinement of others in this price range.		●	87	4	230		96x20x26	4
Dynaudio Audience 82	1700	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Will please the bass-heads, but for pure hi-fi perfomance look elsewhere.		●	87	4	300		106x22x36	4
Dynaudio Contour S1.4	1850	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Great all-rounders: deliver a full-bloodied performance, with good bass.	●		85	4	170		40x18x34	2
Dynaudio Focus 220	1850	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Big and bold - need room to breath plus an amp with a firm bass grip.		●	87	4	250	●	98x20x30	4
Eclipse TD 512	1750	05.02/FT	★★★★★	Partnered with the A502 amp they make a great package.	●		81	6	30		29x37x36	Bk
Eclipse TD 712z	4000	01.05/FT	★★★★☆	Remarkable, will bring uncompromised musicality into your living room.	●		83.5	6	70		98x35x38	Sl
Energy Veritas 2.3i	2400	02.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Solid build, but they aren't as dynamic as the class leaders at this price.		●	90	8	200		103x22x36	2
Ferguson Hill FH 001	9950	07.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning looking acrylic horn speakers - shame about the performance.		●	100	8	30		165x92x75	Ac
Focal-JMlab 1007Be	2300	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	Talented, and an ideal choice if you like your music smooth and refined.	●		89	8	90		39x26x35	2
Focal-JMlab Micro Utopia Beryl	3799	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Stunning - challenging hard for the 'World's Best' standmount title.	●		89	8	100		43x25x38	3
Harbeth Super HL5	2070	05.03/FT	★★★★★	Lookers they're not - but when they sing, few rivals can match them.	●		85	8	150	●	64x32x30	2
Jamo R909	7500	07.06/FT	★★★★★	As accomplished as they are daring - sound more than lives up to the price.		●	89	4	800		127x48x54	3
JBL Ti6K	2600	09.02/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish speakers with some strong qualities but they lack cohesion.	●		90	6	300	●	110x38x53	2
KEF Reference Model 203	3000	09.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent - superb all-round sonic performance and fine build and finish.		●	89	8	200	●	107x25x41	3
Meridian DSP5200	6150	04.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Stunning DSP speakers in some ways, but we expected more.		●	-	-	A75x3		90x30x36	6
Mordaunt-Short Performance 6	3500	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Sensational flagship floorstanders that sound scarily realistic and look lavish.		●	89	6	150	●	121x24x37	2
NHT Evolution T5	2820	05.05/FT	★★★★★	Unusual approach - a great alternative to traditional stereo designs.		●	-	-	A4x250		108x19x44	Bk
Opera Callas SP	1695	05.06/GT	★★★★☆	Highly appealing - beautifully built and the most balanced sound around.		●	88	4	120	●	100x15x26	3
PMC FB1+	1695	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Fun-loving, expressive delivery with exceptional feeling of power and weight.		●	90	8	150	●	100x20x30	3
PMC IB1	5195	04.01/FT	★★★★★	Revealing and enjoyable in equal doses and will please the bass fiends.	●		89	4	500	●	74x33x47	Va
PMC OB1	2700	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2003. Spectacular, controlled and highly musical.		●	87	6	300	●	103x20x33	3
ProAc Response D15	1790	11.02/FT	★★★★★	Musically involving presentation and superlative build - take a long listen.		●	88	8	180	●	98x19x25	6
Quad ESL-988	3500	12.00/FT	★★★★★	World class - the single driver presents a fabulously together sound.			86	8	n/a		94x67x32	3
Revel M22	1700	08.05/GT	★★★★☆	Well-made, dynamic and enthusiastic - inject drive into your music.	●		85	6.4	n/a	●	37x22x30	3
Sonus Faber Cremona Auditor	2149	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Delightful, with a graceful sound that'll pamper your ears hour after hour.	●		88	4	250		35x19x32	2
Spendor S8e	1995	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Worthwhile improvements keep these as well built, capable all-rounders.		●	89	8	300	●	92x23x32	4
Spendor SP2/3E (Classic)	1750	07.00/GT	★★★★★	Will delight with their combination of naturalness, insight and scale.	●		88	8	80	●	54x27x32	2
Wilson Benesch Arc	2500	02.02/FT	★★★★★	The very best of Wilson Benesch speaker magic in a pint-pot design.	●		88	6	200	●	31x23x37	8
Wilson Benesch Curve	5000	02.05/FT	★★★★★	Impressive - closer than any rival we've heard to being all things to all people.		●	88	6	200	●	91x23x37	8
Wilson Benesch Discovery	5700	04.01	★★★★★	Innovative design for the music lover - appeal to the ears and eyes.		●	87	6	200	●	108x23x27	8

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Micro & style systems

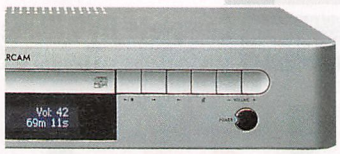
Music in the kitchen and bedroom can sound good and look good, too

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	SOURCE: CD	MP3	DAB	FM	MW	LW	SW	RDS	RECORDS: MiniDisc	CD-R/-RW	MP3	Hard disk	Inputs	Speakers
Bush CDP2025/AMP2025	180	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Separate CD player and amp - good value and it sounds great for the cash.	●												4	
Bush LSD36DAB	80	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Looks the part and doesn't sound too bad - fine for a kid's bedroom.	●		●	●	●								0	●
Creative SoundWorks CD740	200	03.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clock radio with speakers and CD player - tested at £300, now better value.	●	●		●	●								2	●
Denon D-F101	450	02.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Blurs the distinction between micro and hi-fi.	●			●	●			●					5	●
Denon D-M33	300	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	Great successor to the D-M31 but it's not exceptional. Try different speakers.	●			●	●			●					2	●
Denon D-M35DAB	380	04.06/GT	★★★★☆	Another cracking micro from Denon - this one adds DAB. But skip the speakers.	●		●	●	●			●					2	●
Genus PR1i(portable)	135	06.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Comes with DAB, FM and CD playback, put poor sound means it's not a contender.	●		●	●									-	●
Goodmans 1104DAB	89	04.05/GT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi microsystem under £200 in Awards 2005 - ideal for bedroom/kitchen.	●		●										0	●
Hitachi AX-M68D	200	12.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	A case of style over substance - the sound just doesn't match the looks.	●		●	●				●					2	●
Intempo BB-01 (portable)	89	02.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Funky-looking portable unit but it doesn't quite have the sound quality to match.	●		●	●				●						●
Intempo RS-01(all in one)	89	01.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Cube with DAB, FM, CD, alarm and speakers - sonic ability won't set it apart.	●		●	●				●					0	●
Ministry of Sound MOSMC130	100	02.06/GT	★★★★★	Terrific value - offers a fabulous sound considering the price.	●		●	●				●					0	●
Ministry of Sound MOSMC018	100	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Well equipped and stylish white cube system. It even includes a DAB tuner.	●		●	●	●								1	●
Ministry of Sound MOSRC023	80	07.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stand-out boombox - we love the alternative design and the bass power.	●	●	●	●	●								1	●
Morphy Richards 29100	100	04.05/GT	★★★★☆	Proves as good as it looks and unusually employs NXT flat-panel speakers.	●			●										●
Morphy Richards DAB CD	150	02.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Despite its small size and decent spec this system fails to excite.	●		●	●	●			●					0	●
Onkyo CR-505DAB	220	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi microsystem £200-£500 in Award 2005. Dinky with a vigorous sound.	●	●	●	●	●			●					3	
Pure Digital DMX-50	230	04.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Fair performance, but doesn't match the standard of Pure's DAB portable radios.	●	●	●	●				●					2	●
Pure Digital Legato	300	11.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Does a lot of things well, but in sonic terms it can't compete with the leaders.	●	●	●	●				●					1	●
Russ Andrews RAVE (amp/spk)	199	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Mini sound system - nice idea, but you can get better performance at this price.													4	●
TEAC MCDX10	180	Awd04/FT	★★★☆☆	Fantastically svelte looks with lashings of style - the sound is less exciting.	●			●	●								1	●
TEAC Reference 250 DAB	300	10.04/FT	★★★★☆	Great-value option for DAB radio fans. Bigger speakers mean bigger bass.	●		●	●	●			●					3	●
TEAC Reference 300MkII	480	10.05/GT	★★★★☆	Three classy looking boxes with a rich and realistically pleasing sound.	●		●	●	●			●					6	
Thomson CS700	200	11.05/FT	★★☆☆☆	Novel and forward-thinking but the sound is ill-focused, thin and abrasive.	●	●		●	●						●			●
Yamaha CRX-M170	300	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Well-designed, sensibly priced and with a performance that earns our acclaim.	●		●	●	●	●		●					3	●

BUDGET £501 and over

Arcam Solo	1000	03.05/FT	★★★★★	Product of the Year in Awards 2005. Excellent sound from a one-box product.	●	●	●	●	●			●					5	



Arcam Solo

If you want fuss-free hi-fi, this is it. We have always associated high-end hi-fi with separates, and not with single-box products. However, with its excellent all-round sound, Arcam's Solo a CD/amp/DAB tuner combo bridges the gap superbly. This is the first true alternative to hi-fi separates at this price.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ALL-IN-ONE SYSTEMS
ARCAM SOLO

Audio Analogue Enigma	850	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Broad, detailed and musical sound, helped by valve technology.	●			●	●								2	
B&O Beosound 3200	1725	07.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Style, quality engineering and a 40GB CD memory, but it is not great hi-fi.	●			●	●			●				●	1	
B&O Beosound 9000	2550	01.03/GT	★★★★☆	Guaranteed to turn heads and a performance that is impressive to boot.	●			●	●			●					1	
Denon 201SA	800	08.02/FT	★★★★★	Stylish, listenable mini system that sounds almost as good as it looks.	●			●	●			●					7	●
Linn Classik Music	995	04.01/ST	★★★★★	With Classik Unik speakers, a flexible system with true separates performance.	●			●	●								3	
Nakamichi Soundspace 5	799	04.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Huge style appeal but if you want to use it as your main system add a subwoofer.	●			●									2	●
Nakamichi Soundspace 8	999	07.99/FT	★★★★☆	Product of the Year in the Awards 1999. Stylish good looks and musical.	●			●	●								3	●
Nakamichi Soundspace 9	2999	06.02/GT	★★☆☆☆	'Wow' designer looks, but the sound quality is a distinct letdown at the price.	●			●	●								3	●
Philips WACS700(wireless)	600	11.05/FT	★★★★☆	Brings wi-fi hi-fi to the masses - simple to use and remarkably effective, too.	●	●		●							●	●	1	●
Sugden Master System	2647	05.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. It has it all: looks, build and sonic talent.	●												2	
T+A K1	1700	01.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Eye-catching, but fails to deliver the sort of sound we'd expect for this price.	●			●				●					2	

Speaker cables

One of the most cost-effective system upgrades – ever

BUDGET Up to £7/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Atlas 2+1.1	5.50	11.03/GT	★★★★☆	Not the most exciting-sounding cable, but it is sensible value for money.	●			8.5	●				40	●	
Atlas Basic Biwire	3.75	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cracking entry-level cable that offers a neutral balance.	●			2x7	●						●
Black Rhodium AST 200	6	05.98/GT	★★★★★	Remarkably expressive listen: full of energy, it gives powerful bass.	●			8.0	●						
Black Rhodium T200	5.25	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Eminently suitable for rear speakers but don't use in a stereo system.	●		●	6.0	●						
Black Rhodium T90	5	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Thin spaghetti-like cable that delivers a fast, agile and cohesive sound.		●		2.8	●	●					
Chord Co Carnival	3	02.99	★★★★★	Upfront, detailed sound - full bass, vibrant treble and excellent detail.	●			7.5	●				40	●	
Chord Co Carnival Sl Plus	5.50	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			12x6	●	●			40	●	
DNM Reson MkII	6.95	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000 - a blend of smoothness, power and excitement.		●	●		●					●	
Ecosse CS-2.2 Plus	2.70	09.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Designed as a first-step upgrade, certainly better than the standard stuff.	●			7.4	●				40		
Ecosse Mini Flat 4	3.25	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Flexible and unobtrusive - but sound is compressed and bass lacks clarity.	●		●	-	●				Unterm		●
Ecosse Ref Bi-wire CS-4.2	5.25	01.99/FT	★★★★☆	A rocker's cable, though some may find it too hot to handle.	●			9.5	●				60		●
Ecosse Ref CS-2.3	3.85	01.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Ensures bass is taut and imaging is top-notch.	●			8.2	●				40		
Gale XL160-2	2.50	10.95	★★★★☆	Better than it looks, being a biwire cable with tight bass and an open sound.	●		●	20x2	●						●
Ixos XHS-606W	2.50	10.00/GT	★★★★☆	Twisted braid construction - performs well, but lacks midrange detail.	●			2x1.7	●						
Ixos XHS-706W	3.50	02.99	★★★★★	Highly Recommended in the Awards 1997. Superb wide-open-sounding wire.	●			2x2.6	●						

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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What Is HDTV?

HD ready

The new HD ready televisions are set to take the television industry by storm, with a stunning blend of cutting edge design and state-of-the-art technology to create the audio visual sensation.

The introduction of HD television will enable you to maximise your home theatre system and experience digital content the way it was intended.

Continuous improvements in information communication technology, have delivered significant improvements in areas of TV transmission methods, resolution, aspect ratio, colour, and audio, these advances have made television more exciting to watch, making it a real life experience, the latest being HDTV.

Current TV images are only 720 x 567 pixels. HDTV has a display of 1920 x 1080 pixels; that's up to five times more, an exceptional change in viewing quality. HDTV also provides Dolby 5.1 surround sound, meaning that users will be able to watch DVDs in full home cinema surround, and stunning design, the benefits become very clear.

What Will I Need?

There is a lot of confusion over which screens will be compatible with the service when it launches. There are a few basic requirements:

- Your LCD, Plasma or DLP must have a minimum resolution of 720 lines in wide aspect ratio (e.g. a 1024 x 768 would be fine).
- There must be a DVI (Digital Video Interface) or HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface) connection and it must be HDCP compliant. Although a Component Video input can pass a HDTV signal Sky will not be supporting this method as they feel it is more open to encryption hacks.
- Your screen must support both formats; 1080i and 720p Obviously, you will need a new Sky receiver box but they will provide you with this once you subscribe to their HDTV service.

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SAMSUNG

32" Widescreen LCD Television

• 1366 x 768 Pixel Resolution • Nicam Stereo with 20w RMS Output • SRS TruSurround XT • 5000:1 Contrast Ratio • Comes with Tuner, Stereo Speakers and Pedestal Stand

Model No. LE32R74BDX

directlinx 15E4

empire direct price £847.83 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £15

Panasonic

37" Widescreen LCD / DVD Recorder Package

• 852 x 480 Pixel Resolution • 3D Colour Management System • Nicam Stereo with 20w Output • DVD-RAM, DVD-R Recording • Comes with Tuner, Speakers and Stand

Model No. PKG-PAN-TH37PD60PED

directlinx 15E5

empire direct price £999.85 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £30

Panasonic

Complete DVD Home Theatre System

directlinx 15E8

empire direct price £334.33 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £15

• 1000w Total RMS Output • Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II and DTS Decoders • DVD±R(RW), CD-R(RW), MP3 CD Playback • Progressive Scan • Digital Amplifier for Crystal Clear Sound Quality **Model No. SCHT990**

DENON

Ultra Stylish DAB Mini Hi-fi System

directlinx 15E6

empire direct price £274.68 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

• 2 x 22w RMS Output • DAB and Analogue Radio Tuner • Super Dynamic Bass • CD-R(RW), MP3 and WMA Playback • Optical Digital Output • Excludes Speakers (Available Seperately) **Model No. DM35DAB**

SONY

Complete DVD Home Theatre System

directlinx 15E9

empire direct price £349.99 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £15

• 5 x 142w plus 140w Subwoofer (850w) Total RMS Output • Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II and DTS Decoders • DVD±R(RW), CD-R(RW), MP3 CD Playback **Model No. DAVDZ410**

YAMAHA

Compact DAB Mini Hi-fi System

directlinx 15E7

empire direct price £160.54 INC VAT

MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

• 50w RMS Output • Up to 10 DAB and 30 AM/FM Preset Stations • Single CD Player • Headphone Socket • Excludes Speakers (Available Seperately) **Model No. CRXM170**

Pioneer

Complete DVD Home Theatre Package

• 360w Total Power Output • Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II and DTS Decoder • RDS Tuner with 30 Station Memory • USB Interface for Storage Media (MP3, WMA, MPEG4, AAC Capacity) **Model No. DCS360**

directlinx 15EA

empire direct price
£275.22 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £15

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• 5.1 Channel AV Receiver • 5 x 100w RMS Output • Dolby Digital, DTS and Dolby Pro-Logic II Decoding • 4 Satellite (Front L/R), Centre Speaker and Subwoofer **Model No. AV59PACK**

STAR BUY

directlinx 15EB

empire direct price
£214.96 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £10

SONY

7 Channel Home Theatre Receiver

empire direct price
£239.65 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

directlinx 15EC

• 7.1 AV Receiver • 7 x 115w Output • Dolby Digital, Dolby Pro-Logic II and DTS Decoder • Full Digital Cinema Sound • Video Up Convertor to S-Video • DAB Digital Tuner **Model No. STRDB895D-SIL**

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DENON

7 Channel Home Theatre Receiver

directlinx 15ED

• 7 x 80w Output • Dolby Pro-Logic, Dolby Digital and DTS Decoder • Dolby Digital EX and Complete DTS-ES • On-Screen Display • Digital Signal Processing Function **Model No. AVR1906**

empire direct price
£259.19 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

Pioneer

7 Channel THX Home Theatre Receiver

directlinx 15EF

• 5 Channel Input / 7 Channel Output • 7 x 120w Output • Dolby Digital THX EX and Pro-Logic IIx Decoders • USB Host Function • THX Select 2 Certified • Built-in RDS FM/AM Tuner **Model No. VSX1016S**

empire direct price
£392.99 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

SONY

6 Channel Home Theatre Amplifier

STAR BUY

empire direct price
£149.55 INC VAT
MAINLAND UK DELIVERY: £4.99

directlinx 15EE

• 6 x 100w Output • Dolby Digital (EX) Decoders • Dolby Pro-Logic(II)(x) Decoders • Digital Cinema Auto Calibration • Component Video Input / Output • Front AV Input **Model No. STRDG500S**

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Speaker cables continued...

One of the most cost-effective system upgrades – ever

BUDGET Up to £7/m

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Ixos XHS-806W	5	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Improvement over freebie cable but others do it better.	●			2x4.2	●						
Kimber 4PR	5	05.98/GT	★★★★☆	Sounds impressively controlled and muscular - well worth an audition.	●			10	●				50	●	
Linn K20	5	02.95	★★★☆☆	Stranded cable with tight bass, open midrange and detailed treble.	●		●	4.0	●					●	
Merlin C4	2.50	09.04/FT	★★★★☆	Fine entry-level cable, most suitable for slightly warm-sounding set-ups.	●		●	11x.9	●				50		
Merlin C6	4.50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great-sounding cable but the build and finish is disappointing.	●		●	16	●				50	●	
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/2	5	09.02/GT	★★★★☆	Try this clear-sounding cable - you can do better in terms of sheer power.	●			6.0	●	●				●	
Origin Live Soli-core super	6.60	02.94	★★★★☆	Stiff, bulky cable best suited to biwiring. Good detail and separation.		●		15	●					●	
QED 42 strand cable	0.80	12.92	★★☆☆☆	Smooth, detailed sound but rather lightweight bass. OK on a tight budget.	●			5.4x2.7	●				45		
QED 79 strand	1.50	02.94	★★★☆☆	Will add bass weight and liven up mid and treble in budget systems.	●			8x4.0	●				45		
QED Micro Bi-wire	3.50	Awd00/FT	★★★★☆	Competitively priced, ideal for discreet installations. Delivers fine detail.	●			13.3x2.6	●				68		●
QED Original	2.75	04.96	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 1995. Bass is deep and controlled - was Qudos.	●			7.0x3.6	●				45	●	
QED Original Mk II Bi-Wire	5.50	10.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent levels of detail and spaciousness make this cable a winner.	●			17.0x3.6	●				68	●	●
QED Silver Anniversary XT	5.50	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Speaker cable Product of the year in Awards 2005. Sounds excellent.	●			7.0x3.3	●	●			45		

QED Silver Anniversary XT

QED didn't win this Award last year, though its Silver Anniversary had won an Award for the previous six years, so somewhat miffed, the company developed an 'XT' version of its Silver Anniversary cable and it sounds excellent. Discreetly designed, its open and detailed presentation leaps into the foreground superbly.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
CABLES
QED SILVER ANNIVERSARY XT

QED Silver Micro	3.50	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Decent performer and an attractive option for those on a tight budget.	●			5.0x2.5	●				inc		
Supra Classic 4.0T	4	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	Solid performer at a sensible price. Detail is good rather than great.	●			4.0	●			●		●	
Supra Rondo 4x2.5	5	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Excellent design for biwiring applications.	●			4x2.5	●			●		●	●
Tech + Link OFC79	1.80	04.96	★★★☆☆	Good-value cable upgrade but don't expect barn-storming performance.	●			2x4	●					●	
Tech + Link SPC42/3	1.75	05.98/GT	★★★★☆	Good bass and imaging make this a fine starter cable for modest systems.	●				●						
True Colours Ind Sidewinder Bi	6	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Conspicuous and colourful biwire cable. Avoid if you have aggressive kit.	●		●	2x2.5	●				5.99	●	●
van den Hul The Bridge	6	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Wonderfully smooth presentation, if you enjoy realistic vocals, you'll love it.	●			12.5	●	●			60		

BUDGET £8/m and over

Atlas Apex	25	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	Ideal for those who don't want to further aggravate an aggressive set-up.	●			7.5	●				40		
Atlas Ascent	25	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Highly tuneful and refined, every last musical note being uncovered.	●			8.0	●				40		

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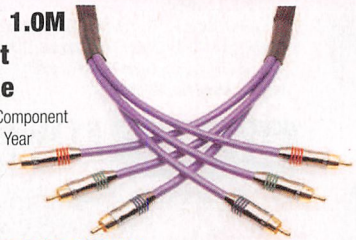
QED P2110 1.0M Scart Cable
What Hi-Fi 2005 SCART Cable of the Year

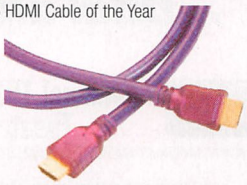
RRP £30.00 **Our Price £24.99**

QED P-CV1 1.0M Component Video Cable
What Hi-Fi 2005 Component Video Cable of the Year



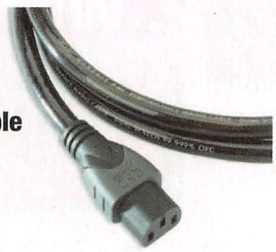
RRP £45.00 **Our Price £38.49**

QED HDMI-P 1.0M HDMI Cable
What Hi-Fi 2005 HDMI Cable of the Year



RRP £50.00 **Our Price £39.90**

QED 1.5M Qonduit Mains Cable



RRP £40.00 **Our Price £36.00**

QED XT400 Speaker Cable

RRP £20.00/metre metre **Our Price £16.75/metre**

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What Hi-Fi 2005 Headphones of the Year

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Allsop, Black Rhodium, B-Tech, Chord, Creek, Densen, DNM, Eichmann, Grado, Graham Slee, Isotek IXOS, Nordost, QED, RDC, Ringmat, Sennheiser, Supra, Tannoy, Van Den Hul, Vibrapod, Wireworld

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Speaker cables continued...

One of the most cost-effective system upgrades – ever

BUDGET £8/m and over

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Termination	Directional	Biwire
Atlas Hyper 3.0	20	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Multi-talented cable that's certain to keep you coming back for more.	●			8.0	●				58		
Audio Note AN-Ba (stereo metre)	33	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Smooth presentation with plenty of weight and scale but you can buy better.	●			8.0	●				33		
Black Rhodium AST200 BiWire	10	02.97/FT	★★★★★	Pick of cables that we've heard at this price - excellent detail.	●			10.6	●						●
Chord Co Carnival Silver Biwire	9.50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Cable Product of the Year - Chord Carnival Silver - in Awards 2004.	●			25x6	●	●			50		●
Chord Co Odyssey 2	17.95	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	For a vibrant and entertaining sound this is a good place for your money.	●			8.0	●	●			40	●	
Chord Co Rumour 4 Bi-Wire	21.95	07.01/GT	★★★★★	Not only does it look good, but it's an impressively dynamic performer, too.	●			9.0	●	●			50	●	
Chord Co Signature	115	11.04/GT	★★★★★	One of the most effective upgrades you will ever hear if you own expensive kit.	●			25	●				inc		
Cyrus Speaker Cable	25	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Capable of performing extremely well in more than just Cyrus systems.		●	●	flat	●				inc	●	●
Ecosse CS4.4 Biwire	9	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Reasonable, but a long way from being outstanding value for money.	●			10	●				60		●
Ecosse CS4.45	9.75	06.05/FT	★★★★★	Hugely capable cable that allows for an enjoyable listening experience.	●			3.0/1.5	●				60	●	●
Ecosse ES2.3/CS2.15 biwire	17	07.01/GT	★★★★★	A combination of two different cables that sound stunning in partnership.	●	●		9.5/1.15	●				60		●
Ecosse Reference ES-2.3	13	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Dynamics are vivid and help this cable grab the attention like few others.	●			9.5	●				40		
Ecosse Reference ES2.2	7.99	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Decent cable but it lacks the polished ability of the best at this price.	●			9.5	●				40		
Ecosse Reference MS-2.3	25	10.99/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000. A room-filling sound that few cables manage.	●			8.2	●				40		
Inakustik Atmos Air 309 Silver	50	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Comprising two 3m lengths terminated - suits taut and energetic kit perfectly.	●		●	15x5	●	●			Inc		
Kimber 4VS	9	07.98/FT	★★★★☆	Not the best at the price, but great all-round cable which works a treat.	●			7	●				50	●	
Kimber 8PR(4.5m term)	153	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Slightly oddball 'bundle of wire' looks - sound is direct and impressive.	●			12	●				n/a	●	
Kimber KS-3035 (8ft term)	3274	04.99	★★★★★	Crystalline clarity, superb bass extension and control - does it all and more.	●			26	●	●			n/a	●	
Merlin C12	7.50	06.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent detail and a dynamic ability that's a match for anything at this price.	●		●	10	●				50	●	
Naim NACA5	9.25	02.94	★★★★☆	Dynamic, with powerful bass and detailed, convincing mid and treble.	●		●		●					●	
Nordost 4 - Flat	12	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent detail and dynamics - presentation has a pleasing character.		●	●		●					●	●
Nordost Blue Heaven Rev II	67.50	10.99/GT	★★★★☆	Fantastic cable but the price becomes jaw-dropping when terminated.	●		●		●	●				●	●
Nordost Cinemaflex 14/4	10	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Neutral, impeccable precision and dynamics.	●			8	●	●				●	●
Nordost Flatline Gold MkII	11.50	05.98/GT	★★★★★	Highly Recommended in Awards 1998. For fine clarity and openness.	●		●		●					●	
Nordost Solar Wind	32.50	01.99	★★★★★	Fine separation and airy, open sound. A fantastic cable, but expensive.	●		●		●	●				●	
Nordost Superflat MkII Bi-Wire	23	07.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine cable in many ways - perfect for systems with overbearing bass.	●		●	0.6	●					●	●
QED Genesis	30	08.99	★★★★★	Costly, but the Genesis performs so well it's certainly worth the money.	●			16.6	●	●			45		
QED Genesis Sl Spiral Biwire	60	04.02/GT	★★★★☆	Everything simply sounds more real - in the right system it's breathtaking.	●			19.6	●	●			68		●
QED Profile 4x4	10	04.97	★★★★★	Incredibly good value, revealing clarity and depth of image that is stunning.	●		●	21.5x2.2	●				45	●	●
QED Profile Silver 12	15	10.97	★★★★☆	Demonstrates superlative resolution with an airy treble - tad tame for rockers.	●		●	20.2x1.6	●	●			68		●
QED Silver Anniversary Biwire	10	07.01	★★★★★	Delivers open, fast and transparent sound - at the price, it's terrific.	●			17x3.3	●	●			68		●
QED X-Tube XT300	10	09.02/GT	★★★★★	Fast, exciting yet well-balanced cable - makes the most of your system.	●			11.7x5.6	●				45		
QED X-Tube XT350	15	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Detail resolution is absolutely terrific.	●			12.1x5.9	●	●			45		
QED X-Tube XT400	20	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker cable over £10 per metre in Awards 2004.	●			6	●	●			45		
Tara Labs Prism Nexa	9.95	08.99	★★★★★	Great with all types of music- don't use with bright-sounding electronics.	●			7.8dia	●				60	●	
True Colours Ind Anaconda	12	10.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Cool design but detail and dynamic contrast isn't up to the class leaders.	●		●	2x2.4	●	●			11.99	●	●
True Colours Ind Diamondback	140	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Ideal against skirting boards but it doesn't offer the detail you'd expect.(2x5m)	●		●	15x2.1	●	●			Inc	●	
True Colours Ind Python	12	10.00/GT	★★★☆☆	Speedy and dynamic, but ultimately disappoints with a muddled bass.	●			9.5	●	●			9.99	●	
van den Hul CS-122	12.50	10.98	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2000. Detail, solidity and punch in spades.	●		●	6	●	●	●				
van den Hul Goldwater	8.50	09.04/FT	★★★☆☆	Good level of detail but it is not the most neutral cable.	●			17x5	●	●					

Analogue interconnects

Use a dedicated lead and sonic delivery takes a jump

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	CONDUCTOR: Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Abbey Road Monitor Starquad	101	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Well-made and accomplished interconnect that's worth a listen.	●			0.8m		●				●		
Arcam RLEAD (iPod to Solo)	60	04.06/FT	★★★★★	Convenience and functionality - buy if you own both a Solo and iPod.	●									●		
Atlas Equator	40	08.02/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Fabulous insight whatever music you listen to.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Explorer	90	07.02/FT	★★★★★	Excellent debut from a new brand - of particular note is the bass performance.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Questor	60	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Makes your kit sound better - avoids imprinting unwanted character.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager	110	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Excellent. Detail resolution is great for the money and bass is taut and powerful.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Atlas Voyager All Cu	170	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent - its open nature and rhythmic delivery ensures an enjoyable listen.	●			1.0	8.5	●				●		
Audio Note AN-C	60	08.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Basic presentation is very musical, but tonal flaws mean they aren't up to rivals.	●			1		●				●		
Black Rhodium Illusion	80	11.03/GT	★★★★★	Intriguing - looks thin and weedy, but sounds rich, powerful and direct.		●		1.0	2.8	●	●			●		
Black Rhodium Melody	35	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Up against supplied cables this is a very worthwhile leap in sonic quality.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Opera	297	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Almost justifies its hefty cost, but not quite.		●		1.0	5.6		●			●		
Black Rhodium Polar Melody	95	01.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Solid presentation but bass lacks weight and high frequencies lacks clarity.	●			1.0	6.3	●				●		
Black Rhodium Polar Rhythm	135	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Likeable but the level of performance on offer doesn't quite match the asking price.	●			1.0	5.5	●	●			●		
Cambridge Audio Atlantic	10	03.96/GT	★★★☆☆	Pocket money upgrade, consider if your system errs towards the over-bright.	●			1.0	6.0	●				●		
Cambridge Audio Pacific	30	03.96/GT	★★★★★	Worth every penny. Immediately attention-grabbing detail and open expression.	●			1.0	6.0	●				●		
Chord Company Calypso	30	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	The fine upper bass punch and fluid midrange make this a solid buy.	●			1.0	0.8	●				●		●
Chord Company Chorus	215	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy Awards '01. Terrifically deep bass, taut midrange and spacious top-end.	●			1.0	7.5	●	●			●	●	●
Chord Company Chrysalis	43	02.99	★★★☆☆	Highly Recommended, Awards '97. Especially suitable if you're after bigger bass.	●			1.0	4.8	●				●	●	●
Chord Company Cobra 3	60	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Worthy partner to the Carnival Silver speaker cable - very musical delivery.	●			1.0	6.5	●				●		●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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PLASMA TELEVISION
PIONEER PDP436SXE

Home Cinema Choice Best Buy NOVEMBER 2004
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ MAY 2006
What Home Cinema BEST BUY

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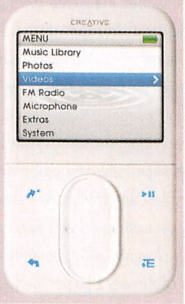


WAS £249.95 SAVE £40.00
£209.95

FREEVIEW PVR
TOPFIELD TF5800PVR

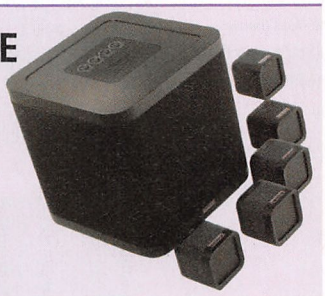
160GB MODEL **£249.95**
250GB MODEL **£299.95**

- Record and watch up to four channels simultaneously
- Twin tuners with twin modulated outputs
- Too many features to list – see www.superfi.co.uk/toppy
- **160 GB model £249.95** Was £289.95, Save £40
- **250 GB model £299.95**
- Black, silver or exclusive 'Polar White' finishes available

What Video & Widescreen TV BUY

HOME CINEMA SPEAKERS
MISSION M-CUBE

- Includes five satellites, five brackets and a subwoofer
- Additional cubes, stands and brackets available
- Black or white finish
- **£799.95** Was £999.95, Save £200



WAS: £999.95 SAVE: £200.00
£799.95
What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

7.1 AV RECEIVER
DENON AVR2105

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision AWARDS 2004

- 7 x 90 watts
- "Astonishing spec for the price"
- Auto level calibration with supplied microphone
- **£249.95** Was £449.95, Save £200

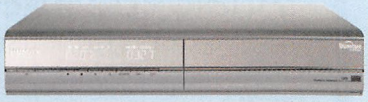
WAS: £449.95 SAVE: £200.00
£249.95

FREEVIEW PVR
HUMAX PVR9200T

WAS: £249.95 SAVE: £50.00
£199.95

- 160GB hard disk with twin tuner
- Simultaneous record/view
- USB port, MPEG file transfer, MP3 playback
- **£199.95** Was £249.95, Save £50

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ DECEMBER 2005



DJ TURNTABLE
TECHNICS SL1210II

- THE reference DJ deck
- UK model, brand new, fully guaranteed
- **£299.95** Was £399.95, Save £100

WAS: £399.95 SAVE: £100.00
£299.95

AMPLIFIER
DENON PMA255UK

- 2 x 30 watts
- Bass/treble controls with source direct option
- UK special edition
- **£99.95** Was £139.95, Save £40

WAS: £139.95 SAVE: £40.00
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What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision ★★★★★ OCTOBER 2003

DVD PLAYER
SAMSUNG DVDHD850

- DivX, MP3, JPEG and WMA playback
- Multi-region DVD playback
- HDMI output
- **£79.95** Was £149.95, Save £70

WAS: £149.95 SAVE: £70.00
£79.95

DAB RADIO
PURE EVOKE 1XT TRI BAND

- FM/DAB (Band III and L-Band for DAB in the UK and abroad)
- **£79.95** Was £109.95, Save £30

WAS: £109.95 SAVE: £30.00
£79.95

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DVD RECORDER
SAMSUNG DVDR122

- DVD-R/-RW/-RAM recording
- Multi-region DVD playback
- DivX, Xvid, MP3, WMA, OGG, AAC, JPEG playback
- **£129.95** Was £179.50, Save £50

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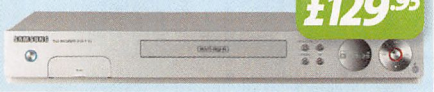
SAVE: £50.00
£129.95



PLASMA TELEVISION
PANASONIC TH42PX60CAB

- HD ready
- Includes floor stand cabinet
- Freeview and analogue tuners built-in
- **£1849.95**

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HDTV HEAVEN
£1849.95

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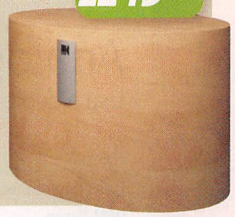
KEF PSW2500

- 250 watt amplifier built-in
- Gorgeous curved cabinet in maple or dark apple finish
- Magnetically shielded, auto standby, 10" bass driver
- **£249.95** Was £349.95, Save £100.00

WAS: £349.95
SAVE: £100.00
£249.95



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DAB RADIO
PURE EVOKE 3

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ MAY 2006

- SD card slot for record and playback
- Electronic Programme Guide (EPG)
- MP3 playback plus iPod input
- **£179.95** Was £199.95, Save £20

WAS: £199.95
SAVE: £20.00
£179.95

MICRO HI-FI SYSTEM
YAMAHA CRXM170

- "An excellent micro"
- CD, DAB/FM/AM tuner
- 2 x 25 watt amplifier
- **£179.95** excluding speakers
- **£269.95** including speakers

EXCLUDING SPEAKERS
£179.95

INCLUDING SPEAKERS
£269.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ FEBRUARY 2006

DVD/HD RECORDER
SONY RDRHXD710

- Multi-region DVD playback
- Freeview tuner
- 160GB hard disk
- **£419.95** Was £499.95, Save £80

WAS: £499.95
SAVE: £80.00
£419.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005

WEB EXCLUSIVES
UNIQUE ONLINE OFFERS

SPEAKERS
ACOUSTIC ENERGY AEGIS EVO

- Choice of black, dark maple or light maple finishes
- A pair of floorstanding Aegis Evo 3 main speakers
- Aegis Evo 1 rear speakers
- Active Aegis Evo subwoofer
- Aegis Evo centre speaker

- **5.1 package £599.95** Was £949.95, Save £350
- **7.1 package £699.95** Was £1049.95, Save £350

5.1 PACKAGE **£599.95**
7.1 PACKAGE **£699.95**

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2004 · Product 2003 · Awards 2002

WHARFEDALE SUBWOOFERS
POWERCUBE PC10+

- 100 watt amplifier, 10" bass driver
- Auto standby, high and low-level inputs
- **£99.95** Was £199.95, Save £100

POWERCUBE PC12+

- As Powercube 10+ plus:
- 150 watt amplifier, 12" bass driver for deeper, tighter, more powerful bass
- **£129.95** Was £249.95, Save £120

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005 ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

MICRO HI-FI
ONKYO CR505 DAB

- DAB, CD/MP3 and amplifier in one
- B grade – fully guaranteed for two years, may have minor marks
- **£169.95** Was £219.95, Save £50

MICRO HI-FI
HITACHI AXM75DAB

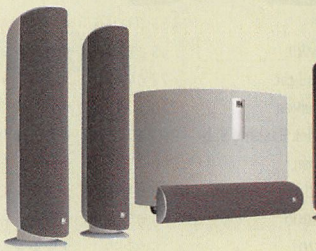
- DAB/FM/AM tuner
- CD/R/RW/MP3 player
- 2 x 25 watts
- **£109.95** Was £179.95, Save £70

IN-STORE EXCLUSIVES
HIGH-END PRODUCTS THAT DEMAND AN AUDITION

5.1 SPEAKER PACKAGE
KEF KHT5005

- Supplied with short stands for easy shelf/desk mounting
- Wall brackets built-in
- **£699.95** Was £999.95, Save £300

WAS: £999.95
SAVE: £300.00
£699.95



5.1 SPEAKER SYSTEM
B&W MT20

- What Hi-Fi Sound&Vision Group Test Winner September 2005
- **£899.95** Was £974.95, Save £75

WAS: £974.95
SAVE: £75.00
£899.95

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ SEPTEMBER 2005

Also available:

- B&W MT30 with superb PCV1 subwoofer
- **£1425** Was £1575, Save £150

CD PLAYER AND AMPLIFIER
MARANTZ CD5001 + PM4001

- Black or silver, metal cases and fascias, system remote control
- "Value for money in bucket and spades"
- **£299.95** Was £349.95, Save £50

WAS: £349.95
SAVE: £50.00
£299.95

CD Player
Pitch control, headphones with volume for monitoring, CD text
Amplifier
2 x 30 watts, record out selector, defeatable tone controls, two pairs of speaker outputs

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION ★★★★★ JANUARY 2006

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01782 265010

*Portable Media Centre

Analogue interconnects continued...

Use a dedicated lead and sonic delivery takes a jump

BUDGET Up to £350

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Multistrand	Solid core	Flat	Length (m)	Diameter (mm)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	Silver	Carbon	Other	Phono term	XLR term	Directional
Cyrus Interconnect	90	04.03/GT	★★★★★	Great buy. Crisp dynamics and breathtaking transparency considering the price.		●	●	0.5		●				●		●
DNM Reson	40	10.98/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Combines smoothness with fine transparency.		●	●	1		●				●		●
DNM Reson Bullet Plug	80	10.02/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year, Awards 2002. Most open-sounding we've heard under £100.		●	●	1		●				●		
Ecosse Best Boy	26	11.03/GT	★★★★★	No looker, but it's honest and affordable, giving fine performance for the money.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ecosse Conductor CA-1 Original	60	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Product of the Year Winner 2000. Allows all genres of music to sound their best.	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse Maestro MA2 Original	175	10.99/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy, Awards 2000. Sonically they amaze. High-end system owners take note.	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse Nu Diva	125	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Not cheap, but they will take your listening experience to a new level.	●			0.8	8.0	●	●			●		
Ecosse The Baton RCA	80	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Fine punch and authority - this is a good, but not great, interconnect.	●			0.8		●				●		●
Ecosse The Composer	32	08.01/GT	★★★★★	A stellar interconnect - the signal is so well preserved it's hard to believe the price	●			0.8		●				●		
Ecosse The Symphony	229	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Authoritative and detailed, a real all-rounder, but it is 10 percent too pricey.	●			0.8	11.2	●	●			●	●	●
Ixos XHA306-100	20	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Great for entry-level. Ditch the cable that came with your budget kit and buy these.	●			1.0		●				●		
Ixos XHA406-100	30	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Fluid-sounding with a refined delivery. Would be useful in an overly bright system.	●			1		●				●		●
Ixos XHA606-100	60	08.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Designed to reduce interference, but the resulting sound is lazy and undynamic.	●			1		●	●			●		●
Ixos XHA806-100	100	10.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Uses impressive gamma-weave noise rejection technology but are disappointing.	●			1		●	●			●		●
Kimber Timbre	89	03.05/GT	★★★★★	Bags of impact and clarity - doesn't work well with bright-sounding kit.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
Kimber Tonik	51	04.03/GT	★★★★☆	Cohesive and informative - will give fine results in most budget systems.	●			1		●				●	●	●
LAT International IC-100 MkII	120	03.98	★★★★☆	Delivers to amps the sort of bass subwoofers love - fast, extended and exciting.		●		1.0	8.5	●	●			●	●	●
LAT International IC-200 MkII	150	10.97	★★★☆☆	Fine levels of detail, resolution and bass but there's a fierce streak in its treble.		●		1.0	8.5	●	●			●	●	●
Merlin Bach	50	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, fast and capable but rivals offer greater refinement.	●			0.75		●				●		
Merlin Chopin	85	10.03/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect over £50 in Awards 2005. Superb.	●		●	1.0	12	●				●		●

Merlin Chopin

If your budget or midrange system needs a kick up the posterior, then invest in this interconnect. It allows for a clean and open delivery that excites and invigorates and is adept at soothing the senses with its sweet and subtle high frequencies. The Chopin will give your CD collection a new lease of life.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST STEREO INTERCONNECT
MERLIN CHOPIN

Merlin Verdi	185	03.04/GT	★★★★★	Not cheap. Its performance makes it well worth the money in the right system.	●			1.0	9	●				●		●
Monster I 400 MkII	45	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Fine balance and weight - a good match for neutral or rich electronics.	●			1.0		●				●		
Nordost Black Knight	72	04.97/FT	★★★★★	Clean sounding - enhanced clarity, extended bandwidth and dynamic resolution.		●	●	1	flat	●				●	●	●
Nordost Blue Heaven	110	10.99/GT	★★★★☆	Exciting and full of attack and drive but up-front sound won't suit everyone.	●		●	1	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Nordost Cinemaflex Bassline Sub	303	10.02/GT	★★★★☆	If you have a very good subwoofer in your set-up buy this great sounding cable.	●		●	5	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Nordost Red Dawn	200	05.98/FT	★★★★☆	At this price it's one for high-end set-ups, but an exhilarating listen.	●		●	1	flat	●	●			●	●	●
Nordost Solar Wind	100	03.98/GT	★★★★★	Technically interesting and fine-sounding - this is one exciting cable.	●		●	1		●	●			●	●	●
Profigold PGA-3000	45	04.02/GT	★★★☆☆	Solidly-made cable. Will flatter systems that tend towards thinness or brightness.	●			0.75		●				●		●
Profigold PGA4201	15	08.99	★★★★☆	A safe bet in entry-level set ups but avoid partnering with already-bright kit.	●			1.0		●				●		
Puresonic 5050A	17	03.96	★★★★★	Brings music to life with bubbly vitality. The price makes this pure dead brilliant!	●			1.0		●				●		
Puresonic 8010A	70	03.96	★★★★☆	Displays a sweetness of tone. Can add pleasing warmth to simple acoustic music.	●			1.0		●				●		
Puresonic 9010A	80	03.96	★★★☆☆	Soundstage is broad and deep, but for the money you'd expect more dynamics.	●			1.0		●				●		
QED Qunex 4 Silver	60	09.00/GT	★★★★☆	Classy looking cable that will handle whatever you throw at it with ease.	●			1	8.1	●	●			●		●
QED Qunex One	20	02.99	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 1999. Staggeringly good value (was called Qnect 1).	●			1	6.0	●				●		●
QED Qunex Silver Spiral	90	03.05/FT	★★★★☆	Sparkling delivery and presents tunes with good space - lacks the finest dymanics.	●			1.0	8.1	●	●			●		
QED Qunex Two	30	03.98	★★★★★	Highly Recommended, Awards 1998. Weighty and involving (was Qnect).	●			1	6.1	●				●		●
Roksan HDC-02A	85	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Truly excellent performer, boasting a wide range of sonic talents, at a fair price	●			1		●				●		●
Supra EFF-ISL (pair)	90	08.99	★★★☆☆	It's expensive, yet it's an unexciting source-to-amp connection.	●			0.75	7	●	●			●		●
True Colours Ind Cobra	200	11.03/GT	★★★★★	In upmarket set-ups this is an interconnect that will really shine - tested at £175.	●			1.0	6.5	●	●			●	●	●
True Colours Ind Tiger	30	10.03/GT	★★★★☆	Looks cheap but, surprisingly, sound quality is polished for the money.	●			1.0	3	●	●			●		
True Colours Ind Viper	70	03.04/GT	★★★★☆	A capable and well-priced interconnect - definitely worth an audition.	●			1.0	6	●				●	●	●
True Colours Ind ViperSix	180	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six channel - insightful but perhaps too restrained for some ears.	●			1.0	21	●				●		●
van den Hul D102 III HB	110	05.98	★★★★★	Product of the Year in the Awards 2001. Smooth, natural and detailed. (Was £79)	●			0.8	7.3	●	●	●		●	●	●
van den Hul Integration Hybrid	150	06.05/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully refined sound but doesn't quite justify its pricetag.	●			0.8	7.8				●	●	●	●
van den Hul The Bay C5	65	04.02/GT	★★★★★	A very good all-round performance cable, and excellent value.	●			0.8	5.2	●				●		
van den Hul The First Ultimate	250	09.00/GT	★★★★★	Stunning - if your system's good, these interconnects are highly recommended.	●			1	7.8			●		●		
van den Hul The Name	45	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best stereo interconnect under £50 in Awards 2004. Cracking choice.	●			0.8m	7.3	●	●			●		●
van den Hul The Second	225	10.96	★★★☆☆	A well-made cable, enjoyable but not remarkable at the price.	●			1	7.3			●		●	●	
van den Hul The Source	85	05.00/GT	★★★★★	Wonderfully-balanced wire for the money - we recommend it without hesitation.	●			0.8	7.0	●	●	●		●		●
van den Hul The Thunderline	130	01.97	★★★★☆	Need warmth and weight? This cop/carbon/sl cable has powerful bass delivery.	●			0.8	7	●	●	●		●	●	●
Vivanco Prowire PHC2215	12	Awd00/FT	★★★★☆	Good value. Allows a weighty and powerful sound. A good step-up from freebies.	●			1.5		●				●		●
Vivanco Prowire SHQ	30	11.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Nicely put together, but it sounds a bit soft and woolly even by budget standards.	●			1.2		●	●			●		●
Wireworld Luna 5	30	06.05/FT	★★★★☆	Don't let the cheap price tag deceive you, this is a very solid budget performer.	●			1.0	5.0	●				●		●
Wireworld Oasis 5	100	03.05/GT	★★★★☆	Offers more space and dymanics than others but it lacks just a touch of insight.	●			1.0	7	●				●		●
Wireworld Rainbow 5	150	05.04/FT	★★★★☆	Six-channel cable - musical and punchy, with bags of attack and detail.	●			1.0	5x6/5	●	●			●		●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Mains cables, blocks & conditioners

Make the most of your equipment with superior mains cabling

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: Cable	TYPE: Block	TYPE: Conditioner	Length (m)	CONDUCTOR: Copper	CONDUCTOR: Silver	CONDUCTOR: Carbon	CONDUCTOR: Other	Captive lead	No of sockets	Figure of 8 (2pin)	IEC (3pin)
Atlas EOS	105	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Well-balanced - delivers impressive depth and scale with AV and hi-fi.	●			1.5	●							
Black Rhodium Pow Management	300	10.03/FT	★★★☆☆	Boosts top- and bottom-end refinement, but reduces pure sonic punch.		●	●	2.0	●	●			●	8		●
Black Rhodium Super Mains 13	55	12.98/GT	★★★★☆	We noticed better bass extension and a more mellifluous treble.	●			1.25	●	●						
Black Rhodium Super Mains 25	80	07.06/GT	★★★☆☆	A worthy boost over freebie mains leads but treble is a little forward.	●			1.25	●	●						
Chord Company Power Chord	140	07.06/FT	★★★★☆	Top class pictures in terms of clarity and the sound is in-yer-face with fine insight.	●			1.5	●							
Clearer Audio Copper-line	95	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Best mains lead in Awards 2005. Gets that extra ounce of performance out.	●			1.0	●							

Clearer Audio Copper-line

If you want an affordable upgrade to deliver that extra ounce of performance then this is it. Plug it into you CD player and there's a surge of sonic sparkle. You're treated to a greater sense of clarity and transparency. The Copper-line manages to generate a renewed sense of enthusiasm, so tracks are heard in a new light.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
CABLES
BEST MAINS LEAD
CLEARER AUDIO COPPER-LINE

Clearer Audio Silver-line	150	07.06/FT	★★★★★	Capable of truly astonishing improvements to your equipment's performance.	●			1.0	●	●				-		
Ecosse The Big Orange	35	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Looks pretty unusual but its sonics cut the mustard.	●			1.0	●							
Ecosse The Big Red	120	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Mean-looking bit of wire with decent balance and attack.	●			1.2	●							
IsoTek Elite	80	05.04/GT	★★★☆☆	It sounds miles better than a free cable, but falls well short of full marks.	●			1.5	●							
IsoTek Gemini 6-way	260	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Stunning performer giving a good overall tonal balance.		●								6		
IsoTek GII Vision	595	09.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains filter in Awards 2004. One of the most cost-effective upgrades.			●							6		
IsoTek Isoplug	30	01.03/FT	★★★★☆	Eliminates mains noise, which could mean a smoother-sounding system.			●									
IsoTek MiniSub	549	08.03/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2003. Improves detail and transparency levels.		●	●							6		
IsoTek Titan	1495	06.05/FT	★★★★★	It's not cheap, but in the right set-up it works wonderfully well.			●	-						2		
Merlin Bk Widow (4-way block)	150	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Delivers a lovely rhythmic style, complete with detail and an even tone balance.		●		2m	●					4		
Merlin Bk Widow v2	85	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Impressive but its delivery isn't quite as clear as we'd like for this money.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Red Back	35	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Maintains the traditional Merlin characteristics of great detail and poise.	●			1.0	●							
Merlin Tarantula	50	11.04/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2002. Offers killer value and sounds simply magical.	●			1.5	●							
Merlin Tarantula 4-way	100	08.03/FT	★★★★★	A cost-effective way to boost the bass weight and detail levels of your system.		●		2	●				●	4		●
Merlin Tarantula Figure '8'	50	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Affordable upgrade - improvements are big enough to make it a worthy buy.	●			1.5	●							
Monster Power Centre HTS1000	160	01.06/FT	★★★☆☆	This filtered mains block performs better than standard mains blocks.		●	●							8		
Nordost Shiva	220	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Levels of detail are excellent, but sound is slightly lean and cost slightly steep.	●			2.0	●	●						
One Click Intelligent Mains Panel	30	08.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Allows you to switch off all your kit with one button - fine, if that's what you want.		●							●	6		●
Russ Andrews 'The Silencer'	40	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Gives a smooth and polished sound and extra bass weight to your system.			●									
Russ Andrews Clas. PowerKrd W320i	75	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Best mains lead under £100 in Awards 2004. Impressively clean delivery.	●			1.27	●							
Russ Andrews Ref Powerkord	115	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Not quite as good value as the Award winning £75 Classic PowerKord.	●			1.27	●				●			●
Russ Andrews The Powerlink	80	Awd05/FT	★★★☆☆	Offers a smooth and clean sound - sadly it is bettered around this price range.		●		2m	●							
Supra Lorad CS-BS	35	09.05/FT	★★★★☆	One of the most cost-effective upgrades you can make.	●			1.5	●							
Tacima IF-I23 (SC5690)	179	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Works well with bright, aggressive hi-fi, but don't use on high-end kit			●	-						6		
True Colours Ind Constrictor	100	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Has a vice-like grip but an open delivery. Uncovers nuances previously missed.	●			1.1	●	●						
van den Hul Mainsstream BS Hy	250	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best mains lead over £100 in Awards 2004. Singularly most effective upgrade.	●			2.5	●	●						
van den Hul The Mainsserver	100	Awd05/FT	★★★★☆	Offers a refined approach - clear choice for those who aren't in a sonic hurry.	●			1.5	●	●						
Wireworld Stratus 5 Power Cord	130	05.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive, but this substantial cable is worth every penny - hugely impressive.	●			2	●							

Speaker stands

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS: Height (cm)	DIMENSIONS: Width (cm)	DIMENSIONS: Depth (cm)	MATERIAL: Steel	MATERIAL: Aluminium	MATERIAL: Concrete	MATERIAL: Wood	MATERIAL: Glass	MATERIAL: Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spikes	Floor spikes
Alphason AG60C	100	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Capable all-rounders with smooth and skilfully defined presentation.	60	25	27	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Apollo A1/6	40	02.99/GT	★★★★☆	Effective, if a little crude, being reasonably weighty and very rigid.	61	21	26	●						●		●
Apollo A2/5	55	08.98	★★★☆☆	Simple and affordable - do a decent job in an entry-level system.	51	20	26	●						●		●
Apollo A4/6	80	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Beautifully built with an outstanding sound - a real bargain.	61	20	26	●						●		●
Apollo AZ range	110	08.96	★★★★☆	Music's strong and vibrant, bass weight excellent. Best in large rooms.	41-61	26	31	●						●		●
Apollo Olympus	85	12.96	★★★★★	Rock steady: speakers enjoy sharper focus and tighter bass.	41-61	28	28	●						●		●
Atacama Nexus 6 (black)	60	12.00/GT	★★★★★	Best Buy in Awards 2000. A steal for build, price and sonic balance.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Atacama R724 (black)	250	01.02/GT	★★★★☆	Fine choice for top speakers - maximise punch and bass response.	60	26	35	●						●	●	●
Atacama SE6	100	12.04/GT	★★★★☆	Good, even-handed all-round performer with some neat design touches.	60	25	30	●						●		●
Atacama SL600	120	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Big, bold stands that lay the fine details bare while sounding natural.	60	31	31	●						●	●	
Custom Design RS300	85	01.06/GT	★★★★★	Excellent buy - ideal to partner affordable kit, and it's stylish, too.	61	22	26	●						●	●	●
Custom Design Signature 402	150	07.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Too much of a mixed bag to suit the average listener.	51	17	18	●							●	●
Epos ST35	99	01.05/GT	★★★★☆	Fine stands that work well with the right speakers.	56	17	15	●							●	●
Kudos S100	495	01.02/GT	★★★★★	Excellent, offering fine imaging, strong focus and outstanding bass.	61	32	32	●						●	●	●
Kudos S50	160	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Weighty build and first-class performance, but rivals do it cheaper.	61	32	32	●						●		●
Mission Stance	100	08.03/GT	★★★★☆	Competent, but the resulting sound can lack authority and presence.	58	21	28	●						●	●	●
Mission Stancette	60	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Good all-round performers and attractive design. Excellent for the price.	57	17	23	●								●
Partington Dreadn.ght Broadside	250	12.04/GT	★★★★★	Expensive but justifiable, improvements to sound are amazing.	60	24	17	●						●		●
Partington Heavi	399	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Heavi by name and nature: very expensive, but very good, too.	60	30	21	●							●	●

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Panasonic

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JVC DVD Recorder/VCR **DR-MV5S**

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L32 CONCEPT

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The SPHEROS R37 is a stylish 37 LCD with integrated floor stand. This model features 16:9 aspect ratio, 450 cd/m2 screen brightness, 800:1 contrast ratio, 1366 x 768 resolution and digital noise reduction.

SPHEROS R37

HD ready

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LOEWE

32" HD READY LCD TELEVISION

The INDIVIDUAL is a stylish 32" High Definition Ready LCD Television. The model features 800:1 contrast ratio, 1366 x 768 resolution, text dual screen, 1 x VGA connection and 1 x HDMI connection.

INDIVIDUAL 32"

HD ready

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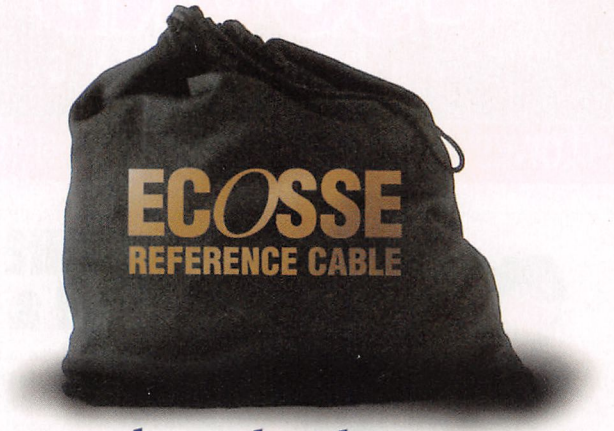

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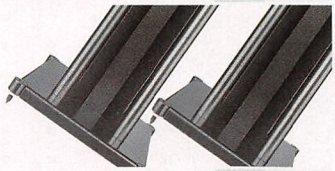
Speaker stands continued...

Essential to make the best of any standmounted speaker

BUDGET Up to £500

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	DIMENSIONS Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Concrete	Wood	Glass	Carbon	Fillable	Top-plate spkies	Floor spkies
Partington Super Dreadnought	169	08.03/GT	★★★★★	Best speaker stands in Awards 2005. Dramatic boost to a system.	60	16	17	●						●		●



Partington Super Dreadnought

If you want to improve the sonic performance of any standmount speakers, the Super Dreadnoughts provide the perfect platform for your cabinets to perform. These stands simply let speakers get on with the task of performing at their best – imaging is more precise and bass delivery is weighty, yet fast and fluid.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST SPEAKER STANDS
PARTINGTON SUPER DREADNOUGHT

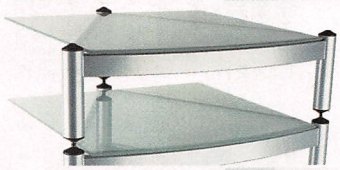
Partington Trophy	130	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Hefty, glossy and eminently useable for speakers great and small.	61	17	17	●						●	●	●
Quadraspire Q60	98	01.06/GT	★★★☆☆	The unusual appearance will appeal to some, but sound lacks balance.	60	24	24				●					●
Russ Andrews Torlyte	299	01.06/GT	★★★★☆	Good looks with fine performance - in the higher echelon of stands.	50						●					●
Sound Organisation Z522	100	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Heavyweight build quality but restrictive dynamics.	57	25	30	●						●	●	●
Soundstyle Status ST122	120	12.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Full marks for aesthetics, but performace falls short of the best.	57	23	28	●						●	●	●
Soundstyle XS122	105	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Beautifully finished and reveal a communicative, spacious sound.	57	25	30	●							●	●
Stands Unique Ref (Carbon Fib)	349	01.02/GT	★★★★☆	Elegant, slim-pillar designs - offer open treble and plenty of agility.	60	17	20				●	●	●		●	●
Target HR60	120	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Splendid stands - they dig deep and differentiate low-end tonality well.	60	25	31	●						●		●

Equipment racks

Provide a solid, secure and stylish home for your treasured kit

BUDGET Up to £1100

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	Height (cm)	No of shelves	Shelf size (wd) cm	MATERIAL Steel	Aluminium	Wood	Glass	Other	Glass shelves
Alphason AD5/ 47CPB	269	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	It's aesthetically pleasing but it won't suit pricier hi-fi systems.	72	61	52	5	47/52	●					
Alphason ADP3/96-PB	450	06.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Difficult to assemble and sound is cluttered, confused and edgy.	52	110	50	3	96x50	●					●
Alphason Aragon AG54/2	105	08.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Best with mini systems and other light, budget kit.	79	54	44	2	54x33	●					●
Apollo Mezzo Soprano	390	04.04/GT	★★★★☆	This is a superbly versatile rack that reveals fine sound and pictures.	48	55	45	3	55/45	●					●
Atacama Equinox	300	10.01/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2005.	90	55	55	4	50x50	●			●		●



Atacama Equinox

This year's accessories Product of the Year is the same as last year's. It makes such a difference to systems it has to be heard to be believed: bass notes come to life, any treble harshness is softened, and the midrange and vocals become more open and natural. Costing from £140, these modular units are superb upgrade.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
PRODUCT OF THE YEAR
ACCESSORIES
ATACAMA EQUINOX RANGE

Atacama Equinox AV	400	04.04/GT	★★★★★	Accessories Product of the Year, Equinox range, in Awards 2005.	61	106	55	3	97x51	●			●		●
Atacama Europa Ref 8	400	06.06/GT	★★★★★	Delivers invigorating, class-leading detail and strong dynamics.	69	80	40	4	68x40		●				●
Audiophilebase Std Base	1032	07.98/GT	★★★★★	Can find an extra level of detail and subtlety. (Tested at £615).	68	57	47	4	57/47		●	●			
Audiophilebase StarBase	1063	12.02/FT	★★★★★	It isn't cheap, but its one of the best supports we've come across.	65	59	52	3	59/52		●	●			
Clearlight Aspekt	550	04.02/FT	★★★★★	One of the best equipment supports around, if your system justifies it.	75	66	57	4	48/40			●		●	
Clearlight Aspekt Double Helix	800	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent system enhancer - build and finish don't justify price.	75	66	57	4	48x40			●		●	
Custom Design Aspect 850	330	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	This is a product that helps deliver tonal evenness and clarity.	85	56	46	5	37x46	●					●
Custom Design Concept 400	320	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Excellent build quality and neat looks, plus a clear and controlled delivery.	70	49	40	2	47x37	●					●
Custom Design e'lite E5	300	10.01/GT	★★★☆☆	Good, with the distance between shelves adjustable, but not great.	69	62	51	5	37x47	●					●
Custom Design Tuscan 4	200	09.03/GT	★★★☆☆	Mediocre rack in terms of design and performance.	50	35	43	4	53x43	●					●
Custom Design Ultra Corner 3AV	380	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Clever stand presents an enjoyable picture and allows for vibrant sound.	53	113	51	3	113x52	●					●
Futureglass Gem (Acoustilam gl)	400	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Special glass shelves deliver a fine sense of drive and insight.	60	40	54	4	49x28	●					●

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RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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Equipment racks continued...

Provide a solid, secure and stylish home for your treasured kit

BUDGET Up to £1100

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Width (cm)	Depth (cm)	Height (cm)	No of shelves	Shelf size (wd) cm	MATERIAL: Steel	Aluminium	Wood	Glass	Other	Glass shelves
Futureglass Gem Separates	400	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Combines great styling with clever flexibility - don't use with bright kit.	60	40	54	4	49x28	●					●
Henley MR5	350	05.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Flexible but sound-wise it's outclassed - don't use for bright electronics.	91	56	50	5	54x45		●				●
Optimum AVFF3 SL	349	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Affordable, space-friendly rack, perfect for small spaces and flat screens.	58	110	40	3	110x61	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 4000	299	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	No-nonsense design that is highly competent and well built.	61	61	52	4	46x37	●					●
Optimum OPT 4906	250	09.99/GT	★★★★☆	The Optimum looks good, sounds good and is reasonably priced.	61	61	52	4	61x52	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 5000	350	08.00/GT	★★★★☆	The OPT 5000 is a sturdy product that provides sharp focus and imaging.	79	61	52	5	61x52	●			●		●
Optimum OPT 5500	350	03.01/GT	★★★★☆	An excellent design from Optimum that's stable and simple looking.	81	61	52	5	61x52	●			●		●
Partington Minim	389	08.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb AV rack - so sonically effective even fine details are improved.	59	160	54	3	160x54	●					●
Partington Minim AV	389	01.06/FT	★★★★★	Solid, strong and a very effective upgrade for a good hi-fi.	75	60	44	5	44x35	●					●
Quadraspire Q4	500	08.04/GT	★★★★☆	The acrylic Q4 delivers an enjoyable sound; a rack to aspire to.	50	60	40	4	60x40		●			●	
Soundstyle Status ST100	350	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Ultra-stable; a class leading performance and worth every penny.	80	78	54	4	57x47	●					●
Soundstyle Status ST310	395	01.04/FT	★★★★☆	Stylish and roomy AV rack but you're limited to just three shelves.	27	45	21	3	38x21	●					●
Soundstyle WG 3AV	300	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Good price for an AV rack and sound remains balanced and likeable.	49	120	46	3	108x46			●			●
Soundstyle WG4	280	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Smooth refined performer that doesn't sacrifice much in the way of bite.	71	48	46	4	48x46			●			●
Soundstyle XS105	345	10.01/GT	★★★★☆	Fine rack, reveals great dynamics and tight, powerful bottom end.	92	67	49	5	56x48	●					●
Target CL430	229	05.05/FT	★★★★☆	Solid number both in terms of performance and build.	80	61	48	4	47x48			●		●	
Target S230	200	08.04/GT	★★★★★	Big, solid piece that can both hold things up well, and perform brilliantly.	61	57	83	4	49x50	●		●			
Tech + Link Avatar 3-Shelf	300	06.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to assemble but the sound's bright and edgy, lacking weight.	52	110	55	3	100x21	●					●
Townshend Vers. Siesmic Sink	1400	12.05/FT	★★★★☆	Pricey but effective - you'll gasp at the difference it can make to your kit.	70	52	38	4	48x38	●					●
Triskom HC-06	499	04.04/GT	★★☆☆☆	Attractive wooden construction but it's not especially good value.	52	100	57	3	100x57			●			●
Triskom Tower 10	400	09.99/GT	★★★★☆	Melamine spine and glass shelves - tested as Tower 1 with four shelves.	115	46	70	5	38x46					●	●
Triskom Tower 12	450	09.03/GT	★★★★☆	Well-designed - soundstage and dynamics feel a little restrained.	100	57	50	6	57x45			●			●

Headphones

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
AKG 301XTRA	90	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Deliver a fast, crisp sound that's really well separated.			●	●		245	●	●	3m	55
AKG Hearo 777 Quadra	225	12.02/FT	★★★☆☆	Wireless headphones from AKG that can simulate eight speakers in the cans.			●	●		320	●	●	n/a	
AKG K141 Monitor	87	07.02/GT	★★★☆☆	A retro design and surprisingly comfortable, but they lack dynamic range.		●		●		225	●	●	3	600
AKG K14P	15	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	Cheap and cheerful - deliver an enjoyable listening experience.	●			●		5.0	●		1.15	126
AKG K24P	22	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent value for money - their exciting, dynamic delivery will win admirers.		●		●		62	●		1.5	32
AKG Merlin 232	200	07.05/FT	★★★★☆	Wireless, well-designed and largely effective - worth a look if you want to go wireless.			●	●		172	●		-	-
Altec Lansing Oyoyo	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Uncomfortable to wear and the performance is sub-standard.		●		●		127	●		-	32
Audio Technica ATH-910 Pro	90	02.98/GT	★★☆☆☆	Average headphones - they lack drive and punch and rock is distinctly undramatic.			●		●	6.3		●	3	30
B&O A8	90	05.05/GT	★★★★☆	If you're keen on making a style statement these are certainly worth considering.	●			●		22	●		1.2	19
Beyer DT 990	160	10.03/FT	★★★★☆	Use a suitable headphone amplifier and you're guaranteed a pleasant listen.			●	●		250	●	●	3	250
Beyer DT231 Galactic	40	Awd01/FT	★★★★★	Best Buy in the Awards 2001. Delivers with confidence and dynamic agility.			●		●	130	●	●	2.5	32
Beyer DTX700	45	03.04/FT	★★★☆☆	This product provides a hefty, punchy listen, but the excitable treble can be tiring.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX800	55	04.04/GT	★★★☆☆	The Beyer DTX800 is good in parts, but at this price they rate only average.			●	●		190	●	●	3	32
Beyer DTX900	65	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Impressive, and would be ideal for regular headphone users looking for comfort.			●	●		180	●	●	3	32
Beyer SX10	25	03.06/FT	★★★★★	A snip at this price. These in-ear headphones sound as funky as they look.	●				●	28	●		1.2	16
Bose TriPort	120	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Excellent pair of headphones - weighty delivery and great style and build quality.			●		●	142	●	●	1.3	
Etymotic Research ER-6i Isolator	100	07.05/FT	★★★☆☆	These iPod-aimed phones get to the core of tunes but the fit is intrusive.	●				●	12	●		1.5	48
Goldring DR100	40	05.06/FT	★★★★★	Great-sounding headphones that are well worth the money.			●		●	295		●	3.0	32
Goldring DR150	70	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Dynamic potency - the bass is well-controlled and the top-end pleasingly eager.			●	●		330	●	●	3.0	32
Grado RS1	750	04.04/GT	★★★★★	A ludicrously pricey pair of headphones but the sound is that good - really!			●	●		255		●	2	32
Grado SR325i	310	07.05/FT	★★★★★	Expensive, but worth it as long as the rest of your system is up to scratch.			●	●		200		●	2	32
Grado SR60	80	07.06/GT	★★★★★	Best hi-fi headphones in Awards 2005. Offer a remarkably airy, open sound.			●	●		200	●	●	2	32

Grado SR60

These have been on our list of favourite accessories since 1999, and we've yet to hear more impressive sub-£100 headphones. They have a remarkably airy, open sound that dissects music in a way you may not have experienced before: prepare to hear previously buried instruments on your favourite tracks.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION AWARDS 2005
ACCESSORIES
BEST HI-FI HEADPHONES
GRADO SR60

Ixos XMM-607	100	12.05/FT	★★★☆☆	Wireless system is effective but they're ungainly and the sonic quality isn't great.			●		●	66	●		-	-
Logitech Sports	15	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Cheap and cheerful upgrade to freebies, especially if you're an excercise fanatic.		●			●		●			
Panasonic RP-HC50	27	12.03/GT	★★★☆☆	OK if you're after noise-cancelling on the cheap, but not great for everyday listening.	●					7	●			
Philips HD1500 (cordless surr.d)	250	04.06/GT	★★★★★	Lovely sound quality and a price reduction make these Dolby 'phones a good buy.			●		●	n/a			-	-
Pioneer SE-DIR800C (cordl surr.d)	295	11.04/GT	★★★☆☆	Easy to use and comfortable, but sound quality disappoints considering the price.			●		●	250			-	
Sennheiser HD 270	80	11.00/GT	★★★★☆	If you want to lock yourself away these circumaural headphones are for you.			●		●	220	●	●	3	64
Sennheiser HD 280 Pro	100	04.04/GT	★★★★★	The HD280 Pros are terrific all-rounders - particularly recommended for DJs.			●		●	220	●	●	n/a	64
Sennheiser HD25	170	12.03/GT	★★★★☆	Show that closed-back headphones don't have to mean a closed-in sound.			●		●	140	●	●	1.5	70
Sennheiser HD485	60	07.06/GT	★★★★☆	Substantial build feels like they will last for ages and they create a convincing sound.			●	●		221	●	●	3.0	32
Sennheiser HD555	100	11.04/GT	★★★★☆	Another impressive pair of headphones from Sennheiser. Standard at-home design.			●	●		260	●	●	3	120

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
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Headphones continued...

A top pair of cans provides a bargain route to quality sounds

BUDGET Up to £750

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	TYPE: In-ear	On-ear	Over-ear	Open	Closed	Weight (g)	3.5mm jack	6.3mm jack	Cable length (m)	Impedance (ohms)
Sennheiser HD650	300	02.04/FT	★★★★★	Pricey, but with the right standard of system they are a must listen product.			●	●		260	●	●	3	300
Sennheiser MX500 White	25	09.05/FT	★★★★★	White to match your iPod - sound immeasurably better than any bundled in-ears.	●					6	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PMX100	35	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Unless you really must have a neckband design, we'd buy the PX100s instead.		●		●		60	●		1.4	32
Sennheiser PX10	20	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Haven't got the quality or user-friendly appeal of others.	●			●		n/a	●		1.0	32
Sennheiser PX100	35	05.05/GT	★★★★★	Best portable headphones in Awards 2005. Faultless sonic ability.		●		●		60	●	●	1.4	32
Sennheiser PXC150	80	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Noise-cancelling design - ideal for noisy commutes, you'll hear more detail.		●			●	65	●		1.8	300
Sennheiser PXC250 (noise-cancel)	90	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Noise cancelling 'phones - ideal travel companion for music-loving frequent flyers.		●			●	65	●	●	1.8	300
Sennheiser PXC300 (noise-cancel)	129	09.05/FT	★★★★★	Superb if you want to listen to music - rather than your fellow commuters.		●			●	65	●		1.8	300
Shure E2c	60	07.06/GT	★★★★★	If you don't mind your ears feeling full, these are a great-sounding proposition.	●					30	●		1.6	16
Shure E4C	200	06.06/FT	★★★★★	Best-in ear headphones we've heard - intrusive design but remarkable sound.	●				●	31	●		1.5	29
Sony MDR-ED21LP	20	12.03/GT	★★★★★	Superb - these Sonys are an ideal, affordable upgrade for portable users.	●					5	●	●	1	16
Sony MDR-EX71SL	35	05.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Stylish but, considering the price, they give a disappointing sonic performance.	●			●		4.0	●		0.5	16
Sony MDR-NC6	60	07.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	Crude and ineffective noise-cancelling and the sound is harsh.			●		●	150	●		1.5	65
Technics RP-DH1200E	135	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Not the last word in fidelity but these DJ headphone are effective and built to last.			●	●		435	●	●	1.2	50
Technics RPF880	58	07.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Looks, fit, finish, volume please but an over-assertive sound ruins their chances.			●	●		335	●	●	3	50
Turbosound in-ear headphones	20	09.04/FT	★★☆☆☆	Designed to protect your hearing, sadly they are uncomfortable and music-killing.	●					16	●		1.0	
Vivanco SR620	25	12.03/GT	★★☆☆☆	Clever design but there's little to recommend these portable Vivanco headphones.			●		●	150	●	●	3	32

Remote controls

Control all your equipment from a single handset

BUDGET Up to £200

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	Batteries	Battery life (h)	Rechargeable	Backlight	Touchscreen	Macro functions	PC programmable	Dimensions (hxwxd) cm
Cambridge Audio M1+Explorer	50	01.05/GT	★★★★★	Bargain - its large LCD display and quick learning make it a joy to use.	4xAAA			●	●	●		180x3x8
Logitech Harmony 525	70	12.05/FT	★★★★★	Clever and effective and looks classy - it's a peach.	4xAAA			●		●	●	21x5x

Logitech Harmony 525

Replaces the Award-winning H655. Superb learning remote control able to operate up to 12 devices – you simply set it up using your PC or Mac, and the brilliant software makes the configuration process a breeze. The unit even allows for simple 'macro' functions, so you can turn on several devices at a touch.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Nevo SL	650	10.05/FT	★★★★★	Technology Best Buy in Awards 2005. Wi-Fi control and huge IR database.	Litheum	-	●	●	●	●	●	19x8x3

MP3 players

Store up to 10,000 tunes and take them everywhere you go

BUDGET Up to £600

PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS: MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Apple iPod 30GB	219	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Excellent all-rounder - number one choice for Mac owners.	●		●			30G	●	●	●		●	●	14	10.5x6x1	136
Apple iPod 60GB	299	12.05/GT	★★★★★	The best-sounding players you can buy and the easiest to use.	●		●			60G	●	●	●	●	●	●	20	10x6x1.4	157
Apple iPod nano 1GB	110	06.06/GT	★★★★★	Great punchy sound, sleek looks and it is easy to use.	●		●			1G			●		●	●	14	9x4x0.7	43
Apple iPod nano 4GB	179	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Best ultraportable MP3 player in Awards 2005.	●		●			4G	●	●	●		●	●	14	9x4x0.69	42
Apple iPod Shuffle 1GB	69	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Chewing-gum-sized unit with a big memory and great sound.	●		●			1G	●	●	●		●	●	12	2.5x8.4x0.84	22
Archos AV400	400	11.04/FT	★★★★★	Best multimedia portable in Awards 2004. High standards.	●	●			●	20G		●			●	●	12	13x8x2	280

RATINGS
★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

TESTED
Month/FT= First Test
Month/ST= Supertest
Month/GT= Group Test

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MP3 players continued...

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PRODUCT	£	TESTED	VERDICT	WE SAID...	PLAYS MP3	WMA	AAC	Radio	Microphone	Storage capacity	USB	USB 1.1	USB 2.0	FireWire	PC	Mac	Battery life	Dimensions (hwd) cm	Weight (gm)
Archos AV500	350	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Offers lots of features but newer rivals are more user-friendly.	●	●			●	30G			●		●	●	15	12x8x1.8	260
Archos AV700	400	10.05/FT	★★★★★	A digital party in your pocket - video quality is good.	●	●			●	40G		●	●		●	●	15	11x21x1.9	590
Archos Gmini 400	235	03.05/GT	★★★★★	A genuine master of all trades in the portable market.	●	●			●	20G	●	●	●		●	●	10	6x11x1.7	160
B&O Beosound 2	325	08.05/FT	★★★★☆	Expensive but breathtakingly beautiful and it sounds exciting.	●	●				1.0G					●	●	8	73diax19	4.5
Cowon A2	320	03.06/GT	★★☆☆☆	Promising spec let down by below-par performance	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●	●	18	8x13x2	298
Creative Zen Nano Plus	50	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Generous specification and decent sound for the money.	●	●		●	●	256M	●	●	●		●		15	7x3x1.3	34
Creative Zen Vision:M	250	03.06/GT	★★★★★	Strong video and MP3 credentials are used to full effect.	●	●		●	●	30G			●		●		14	10x6x1.5	166
EZ-AV EMP-400	59	11.05/GT	★★★★☆	Classier than the chromed EMP-500 - use better headphones.	●	●		●		128	●	●			●	●	17	77x4x1.6	43
Grundig MP1XX VP6200	350	07.06/FT	★★★☆☆	Portable Media player - jack-of-all-trades, master of none.	●	●		●	●	30G			●		●		13	8x12x2	22
iAudio 5	120	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Holds its own against stiff competition - holds a tune well too.	●	●		●	●	512M			●		●	●	20	8x4x1.8	28
iAudio F1	89	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Appealing for its looks and usability but not for the sound.	●	●		●	●	256			●		●	●	22	3x7x1.8	34
iAudio G3	124	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Good features but it could do with better sound quality.	●	●		●		512			●		●	●	50	6x5x1.7	36
iAudio M5	189	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Solidly built piece of kit but falls down on user-appeal.	●				●	20G			●		●	●	14	6x10x1.4	145
iAudio U2	124	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	A little bit of magic has been woven into this tiny ultraportable.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●	●	20	3x7x1.8	34
iriver H10	179	07.05/ST	★★★☆☆	Plenty of features but against new rivals it's fairly average.	●	●		●	●	5G	●	●	●	●	●		12	6x10x1.5	96
iriver T10	140	12.05/GT	★★☆☆☆	Sturdy, looks ready for extreme sports - let down by the sound.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●		50	9x4x2.9	49
iriver T30	100	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Too expensive and too confusing in the bass and midrange.	●	●				1G			●		●		20	6x3x2.2	27
iriver U10 1GB	139	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Tiny media player - great sound and loveable nature.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●		28	7x5x1.6	70
Ministry of Sound MP020	40	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Bona-fide bargain - winner for performance and features.	●	●				128M	●				●		15	9x4x2	25
Ministry of Sound MP043	50	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Excellent, inexpensive ultraportable for PCs and Macs.	●	●				256		●	●		●	●	15	9x3x1	25
Ministry of Sound MP055	170	12.05/GT	★★★★☆	Justifies its existence with a more-than-decent performance.	●	●			●	5G			●		●	●	10	6x8x1.7	80
Ministry of Sound MP076X2	35	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Sound quality, value and great software make this a fine buy.	●	●				256M	●				●		8	9x3x1.0	25
Ministry of Sound MP083X10	90	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Big 'house-club' sound - big, bass-heavy and full of attitude.	●	●			●	1.0G			●		●	●	20	4x8x1.5	30
MobiBLU DAH-1900	110	06.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Doesn't lead the field on sound, but does on battery life.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●		150	7x5x2	66
Mpio One	120	12.05/GT	★★★☆☆	Decent player but not really the thing for watching video on.	●	●		●	●	256M			●		●	●	11	3x6x1.5	34.5
MPman MP-F57	25	04.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	Tempting price-per-meg but middling build and sound.	●	●			●	256			●		●	●	12	3x8x1.2	32
MPman MP-Ki 128	15	11.05/GT	★★★★★	Phenomenally cheap, simple to use and sounds good.	●	●				128		●			●		10	8x3x1.5	35
MSI Megaview 588	280	12.05/GT	★★★★★	Multimedia portable - lots of features and great performance.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		7.5	12x8x2.5	245
O2 Digital Music Player	100	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	We like its compatibility with SD cards but not the sound.	●					64M			●		●		7	10x5x2.1	80
Philips HDD6320	200	02.06/FT	★★☆☆☆	Once you get past the impressive styling it has little to offer.	●	●				30G			●		●		17	17x10x1.7	150
Safecom SMFD-1G	89	UMP3.05	★★★☆☆	Compact and affordable but the sound is nothing special.	●	●		●	●	1G			●		●	●	10	9x3x1.9	35
Samsung YH-J70	220	03.06/GT	★★★☆☆	Not bad but needs to offer more to compete with the leaders.	●	●		●	●	20G			●		●		25	10x6x1.5	135
Samsung YP-Z5	110	06.06/GT	★★★★★	Thoroughly enjoyable and musically rewarding performance.	●	●				1G			●		●		35	9x6x4	58

Samsung YP-Z5

The new king of the hill, for build, looks and usability, this 1GB player has the lot. As for its sound, we are utterly delighted with its thoroughly enjoyable and musically rewarding performance; with all genres this ultraportable excels. The sound is dynamic and open and – best of all – it has a sublime midrange.

WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION BEST IN CLASS

Sony NW-E507	150	06.06/GT	★★★★☆	Neat looks and controls plus excellent sound.	●	●		●		1G			●		●	●	50	3x9x1.5	37
Sony NWA1000	160	02.06/FT	★★★★☆	Rocking good sound and it looks elegant.	●					6GB			●				20	9x6x1.9	109
Sony PSP Games Console	170	Awd05/FT	★★★★★	Technolgy Best Buy in Awards 2005. Incredible with movies.	●					1.8G		●	●		●	●	5	21x11x1.9	590
Toshiba Gigabeat EG-F20	200	09.05/GT	★★★★☆	Gorgeous looks and dynamic and rhythmic sound.	●	●				20G			●		●		16	11x6x1.6	160

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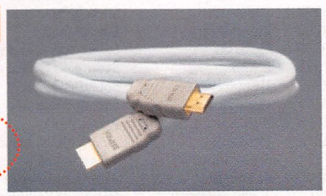

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★★★★☆ Very good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Below par
★☆☆☆☆ Poor

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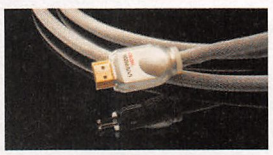

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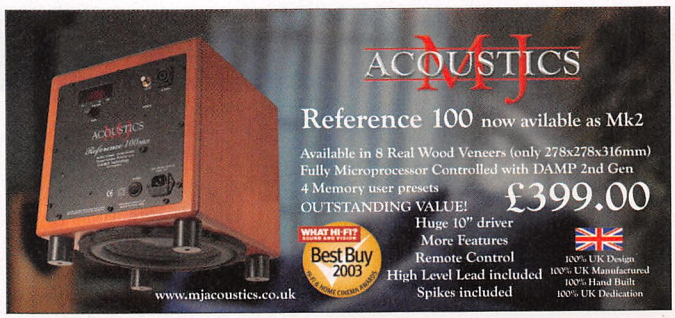

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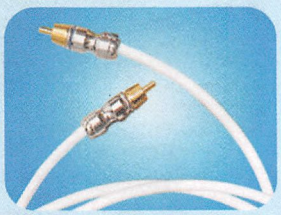

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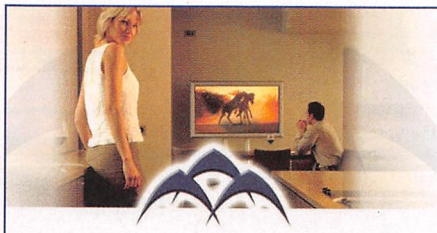

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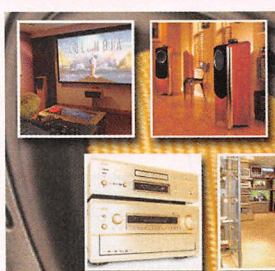

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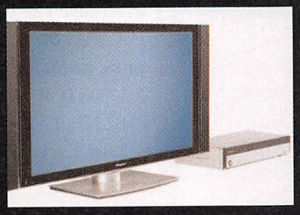

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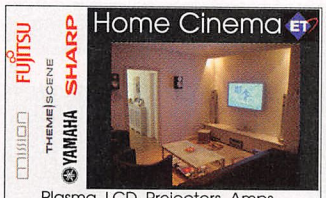

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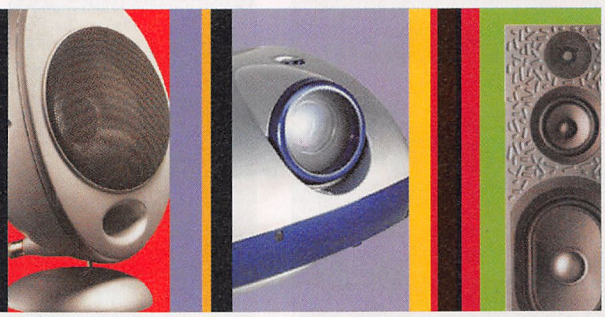

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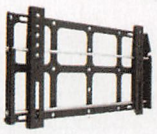

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A

AAC Compressed audio format popularised by Apple. Sounds better than MP3, though fewer products are able to play or handle it.
ANALOGUE The old-fashioned way of storing audio data, as used by VHS tapes, LPs and cassettes to store video or audio. (See DIGITAL)
ANAMORPHIC Some DVDs offer an improved picture on widescreen TVs, banishing the so-called letterbox effect.
APPLE LOSSLESS This new audio compression format from Apple loses little quality over standard CD sound, but files are half the size.
p64 **ASPECT RATIO** The proportions of a screen or image – a ratio of height and width. (see WIDESCREEN)

B

BASS Low frequency sounds, which are hard to reproduce.
BASS REFLEX A speaker design using air-flow from a port in the cabinet to help deliver extended bass reproduction.
BIAMPING Each drive unit of a speaker is driven by a separate amp channel, so a pair of two-way speakers needs two stereo amps and two runs of cable to each speaker. (See Biwiring)
BINDING POST The terminal round the back of a speaker. It has a threaded collar for gripping bare wires and sometimes a socket that takes banana plugs, too.
BIT A single piece of digital information, basically an 'on/off' signal. (see DAC)
BIWIRING Gives some of the benefits of biamping, but at lower cost. You need suitable speakers (with two sets of inputs and a split crossover), then send twin runs of cable from the amp (again if suitable) to each speaker.
p8 **BIT-RATE** A measure of the quality of an audio or video file, in kilobits per second (see KBPS)
BLU-RAY One of two rival formats aiming to provide a higher-quality successor to DVD. See also HD-DVD.

C

p62 **CARTRIDGE** The device that plays a record. It converts the wobbles in the record's groove into electrical signals for your amp – either moving-magnet or moving-coil.
CD-R/-RW CD-Rs are record-once discs, while CD-RWs can be used many times.
COAXIAL One of the two types of digital audio connector. Offers a slightly better performance than optical, except when extremely long lengths of cable are used.
COLORATION This is a shift away from the natural rendition of the music. Coloration is undesirable 'boomy' bass, a 'nasal' midband or 'splashy' treble.
COMPONENT Superior to Scart, S-Video or composite, component cables carry video from a source (eg, DVD player) to a display (TV or projector). The cables use three coloured leads.
COMPOSITE The weakest of the video-only connections.
COMPRESSION (1) When talking about data, compression is the process of squeezing files to make them smaller, sometimes, as with MP3, by discarding some of the musical information to make the files more practical. (see BIT-RATE)
COMPRESSION (2) Used by radio stations to reduce level differences between loud and soft parts of music.
CROSSOVER This is the circuit inside loudspeakers that splits the incoming signal, sending the high frequencies to the tweeter and the low ones to the low-frequency woofer.
CRT Cathode Ray Tube. The technology behind conventional televisions and large, high-end video projectors. Three colour tubes – one red, one green and one blue – are 'converged' to create an image on the screen.

D

DAB Stands for Digital Audio Broadcasting: digital radio on BBC and independent stations. Can provide a better, hiss-free sound.
DAC Digital-to-analogue converters (DACs) turn strings of bits into audio. CD players, MP3 players and AV processors contain DACs. Standalone units also exist.
DECIBEL (dB) Measures sound pressure. A change of 1dB is just about audible, while +10dB sounds like the level has been doubled.
DECODING DVD soundtracks usually include multichannel audio in a certain format (see Dolby and DTS). You need a processor or AV amplifier to decode this info and pass it to multichannel speakers.
DIGITAL Digital data is stored in bits – as numbers that can be transferred with very little degradation in quality. Most modern hi-fi and AV components process digital data in the quest for the best audio and video performance.
p64 **DLP** Digital light processing is a projector technology that's usually superior to rival LCD.
DOCK Can be as simple as a socket for your MP3 player that then connects to your computer – otherwise, it might include speakers.
DOLBY One of the two companies that creates the multichannel soundtracks for films, which eventually get transferred to DVD. There are many formats, some of which are more advanced that others – for example, Dolby Digital and Dolby Digital Surround EX. (See DTS)
DTS Like Dolby (see above), DTS encodes DVD soundtracks for playback on compatible AV receivers.
DVD-A High-resolution audio format that offers multichannel surround music and 24-bit/96kHz stereo.
DVD or DVD-VIDEO Video on CD-sized discs with capacity for widescreen movies and multichannel audio.
DVD-R/-RW The most widely used recordable DVD format. DVD-R recordings can't be erased, but DVD-RW discs can be reused many times.
DVD+R/+RW Developed by Philips, this is a DVD recording format with similar properties to DVD-R/-RW, but not fully compatible.
DVD-RAM A recordable DVD format including a 'time-slip' function, so you can watch the start of a TV show while recording the rest.
DVI-D A high-quality digital connection for DVD players and displays, which carries a video signal without ever converting it to analogue.
DYNAMIC RANGE The range, in decibels, between the largest and smallest audio signals reproduced by hi-fi. Classical music often has large variations in loudness.

F

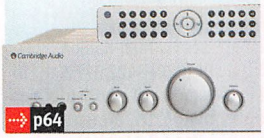
FIREWIRE Ultra-fast data connection used by MP3 players, computers, and high-end home cinema equipment
FLOORSTANDER A type of taller speaker that stands directly on the floor (sometimes on built-in spikes).
FREEVIEW There are 30-plus channels available for free using a normal aerial if you have a set-top box.
FREQUENCY High-pitched sounds have high frequency, whereas low-pitched ones have a low frequency. Audible sounds range from about 16Hz to 20kHz.

H

HARD DISK A machine for storing large quanities of data. Hard disks first appeared in computers, and are now found in MP3 players (for audio and photos), set-top boxes and DVD recorders (for video and audio), and network music servers (for audio).
HDCD means High Definition Compatible Digital – a coding system for compact disc that aims to get better sound. Needs a CD player fitted with a suitable decoder.
HD-DVD Competing with Blu-ray to be high-def format that eventually replaces DVD.
p46 **HDMI** A high-quality digital connection going from DVD players to displays – competing with – and superior to – DVI-D.
HD-READY Label on any TV that's able to show High Definition broadcasts.
HERTZ (Hz) Unit of frequency. One Hz means a signal has one cycle per second.
HIGH DEFINITION The next generation of television has arrived. HD has been around in the US and Japan for years, and finally – via subscriptions to Sky and Telewest – we can revel in this great new technology, too. Ultra-detailed pictures, so brimming with life they look almost three-dimensional. Note that you'll need a nHD-Ready TV.
HORN-LOADED A method of improving the efficiency of a loudspeaker, by adding a structure like a horn.

p58

p62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I

p77 **IMPEDANCE** A low impedance draws a high current flow from the source, while a high impedance draws a little. Speakers with a low impedance are more difficult for an amp to drive.

K

KBPS Kilobits per second. This is either a transfer rate – how fast data can be piped down a cable – or, more commonly, it's a compression rate: how much data has been retained when a music track (for example, an MP3) has been compressed. A higher figure means faster data flow and better- sound.

L

p38 **LCD** With plasma, the main flatscreen TV technology. LCD is the dominant type for sets with screens under 37in, though larger sets are becoming available. Picture quality is improving, too. Similar technology is used for cheaper projectors.
LINE LEVEL Describes inputs that don't need amplifying before the amp uses them.

M

MEDIA CENTER When installed on a suitable PC, this piece of Microsoft software allows you to run your computer as a home-entertainment system – with TV tuning, hard-disk recording, DVD playback, and more.
MEMORY CARD A small plastic card that fits in electronic devices – from portable players to TVs, DVD recorders and video camera. It's possible to record audio, video or images onto the card and transfer data to or play it back on another compatible device or computer.
MIDRANGE The frequency range where most of the instruments and voices are heard. It must be of a high quality if singers, guitars, trumpets, and so on, are to sound natural.
MONOBLOC An independent mono power amplifier – so two monoblocs are required to run in a stereo system.
MP3 MPEG 1 Layer 3. The compression system used for downloading music files from the internet to a PC or MP3 player. It can reduce file sizes by a factor of 10 to enable faster downloads, though compressing files less means better quality.

N

NETWORK MUSIC SERVER Stores tracks from a large number of CDs (sometimes as MP3 files) and can pipe them around your home.
NETWORK MUSIC PLAYER Attaches to either a router or a network server, and allows you to access music files that might be stored elsewhere. Sometimes called a 'client'.
NTSC The North American system of TV broadcasting. Not always compatible with the European PAL system.

O

OHM Unit of electrical resistance to current. The lower the figure, the harder a speaker is to drive; so the higher, the easier the speaker is to drive.
OPTICAL A digital audio connector. (See COAXIAL)

P

PAL The European system of TV broadcasting. (see NTSC)
PHONO STAGE Turntables' cartridges output signals at much lower levels than CD players, so need extra amplification (a phono stage). Many amps have ones built-in, but you can also buy dedicated phono amps.
p38 **PLASMA** A type of large, flatscreen TV – these sets are available up to 60in. Sizes go down to 37in, where they compete with LCD televisions directly.
POWER AMP Supplies audio signals from the source component to the speakers.
POWER-HANDLING The highest safe power for speakers. Note, it's easier to damage speakers with an amp of too low power driven hard, than with too much.
PREAMPLIFIER The control part of an amp. Built into integrated amps, but can be separate and used with a power amp or active loudspeakers.
PRO-LOGIC (See PROCESSING MODES below)
PROCESSING MODES Some AV amps and processors create multichannel soundtracks from stereo by creating the sound for the rear channels. Dolby Pro-Logic is one.
PROGRESSIVE SCAN Creates DVD pictures in one hit. Gives clearer, flicker-free images than the conventional system, which uses interlaced, rapidly refreshed horizontal lines.

R

RDS Radio Data System. Data piggybacked on FM radio allowing RDS tuners to display the names of stations, and perform a range of functions, such giving you up-to-the-minute traffic reports.
REAR-PROJECTION TV A projector housed behind a screen in a large box – these TVs can give huge pictures, are less bulky than CRTs, and can offer excellent value.
ROUTER The part of a network that forms the hub to which all the computers are joined. Many have modems built-in, allowing many computers to share a single broadband internet connection.

S

SCART Scart cables can be video-and-audio, or video-only. The most commonly used AV connection, notable for its large, rectangular terminals. Not as good quality as component or digital.
SD CARD Type of memory card
SIX-CHANNEL INPUT Many DVD players now have built-in Dolby Digital decoders. To take advantage of these they need to be connected to a home cinema receiver with a six-channel input.
p77 **STANDMOUNT** A type of speaker typified by its compact dimensions. Sits on a dedicated support for the best sound. Often superior to similarly priced floorstanders in many areas, but less bass.
SUBWOOFER Separate speaker box making deep bass – the 'point 1' in 5.1.
SUPER AUDIO CD (SACD) Developed by Sony and Philips, SACD uses one-bit Direct Stream Digital (DSD) technology. Most discs are dual-layer, with a CD layer that'll play on a normal CD player and an SACD layer for better performance when replayed on an SACD player.

T

TAPE LOOP Two sockets on an p64 amplifier that let the signal out for tape-deck recording; there's another pair that lets the signal back in for replay, for checking recordings.
TONAL BALANCE Describes how a piece of hi-fikit reproduces sound in relation to treble and bass balance.
THROW RATIO Never buy a projector without making sure it'll fit in your room. Decide what size screen you want, then measure the distance your new projector will be from the screen. Finally, use the throw ratio to work out if the projector is suitable. You'll find more details in the manual.
THX Developed by LucasFilm, a set of standards for Dolby Pro-Logic gear that should ensure a certain quality of home cinema sound.
TONEARM The part of a turntable that guides the needle on the record.
p62 **TRANSIENTS** Short and sudden events in music such as a cymbal crash or the crack of a stick on a snare drum. Can be difficult to reproduce.
TREBLE High frequencies. When we say treble is 'splashy', it means that cymbals, for example, sound like they're going 'tizzshsh', rather than having a sting and a crispness to them.
TWEETER The small speaker driver that handles treble.

U

USB Another type of data connection (see FireWire), originally used only on computers, but now commonly used with MP3 players and other hi-fi and home cinema products. USB 2.0 replaces the slower 1.1.

V

VALVE Amplifying device using electrodes in a glass vacuum tube. Gives a warm, seductive quality of sound.

W

WATT More watts can equals more power, but loudness depends on speaker sensitivity and room size.
p34 **WIDESCREEN** Many television programmes, and nearly all DVD discs, are in widescreen format. This can vary from 14:9 (a compromise ratio used by TV broadcasters) to 16:9, which is the ratio used on widescreen television sets and by most DVDs. Many films shown at the cinema are in 21:9, so you'll still get black bars on a widescreen television. Old-fashioned 'square' TVs use a 4:3 size. (see ASPECT RATIO)
WI-FI A system for connecting computer and hi-fi components without any cables.
WMA Windows Media Audio is a rival format to MP3, claiming to compress files twice as effectively as MP3.

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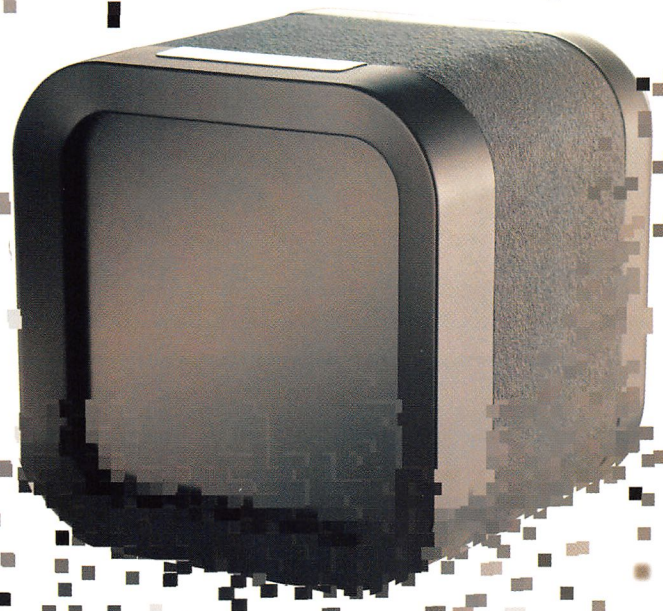
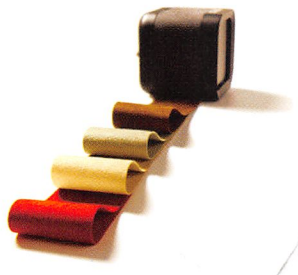


6.1 SURROUND SOUND

5.1 SURROUND SOUND

Digital Cinema Sound.



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